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Rapporto dell'Oceania (FCBCO)

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Oceania is a vast "sea of islands" where the Church prays at the dawn and close of each day. Amid ecological fragility and cultural richness, the Church is called to embody communion, participation, and mission as a prophetic sign of hope. The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO) unites Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands, Pacific nations, and Eastern Catholic Churches, forming a network of listening and discernment across 21 nations.

We can observe Common Threads Across Jurisdictions that I would like to highlight:

1. **Formation First:** Every local Church recognises that synodality is spiritual conversion, not just technique. Training initiatives—workshops in Suva, facilitator pilots in New Zealand, parish formation in Guam, and national networks in Australia—aim to form hearts attuned to the Holy Spirit.
2. **Shared Discernment Practices:** "Conversation in the Spirit" is becoming a pastoral habit, echoing the Emmaus journey where Christ walks with His disciples.
3. **Inclusive Participation:** Synodality reflects the baptismal dignity of all—laity, religious, ordained—while embracing indigenous wisdom and those on the margins, including disability inclusion in New Zealand. Suva's geographic and generational diversity mirrors the Church's catholicity.
4. **Mission Renewal:** Evangelisation initiatives, cultural integration, and respectful dialogue express the Church's call to be missionary disciples, witnessing unity in diversity.

We also see Key Divergences across our different realities:

Different regions progress at different paces: Australia leads with 17 dioceses holding or planning synods and a national coordination hub. New Zealand focuses on pilots and structural reshaping. Suva implements a phased rollout through 2028 with strong outer-island inclusion. Guam is in early stages with gradual parish engagement beginning in 2025.

Coordination models also vary: Australia uses a national committee, while Suva employs a phased diocesan plan. New Zealand and Guam rely on local councils. Inclusion focuses differ—New Zealand emphasizes disability and indigenous peoples, Australia prioritizes First Nations, Suva targets geographic reach, and Guam seeks vocational balance.

We now would like to share with you two Notable Synodal Experiences

In Fiji (Suva) part of the Episcopal Conference of the Pacific: A 57-member team trained in September 2025 embodies the Church as a "tent enlarged." Its three-phase plan—Launch, Foundation, and Evaluation through 2028—culminates in communion with the universal Church. Cultural and geographic integration ensures peripheral voices become central.

In Australia: Post-Plenary Council momentum has birthed diocesan synods since February 2023, supported by national coordination. Transparent dialogue models ecclesial charity in a polarized world. Recent engagement with First Nations reflects a theology of reconciliation and listening.

Conclusion

Oceania's synodal journey is a pilgrimage of grace: converging on formation, inclusion, and discernment, yet diverse in pace and structure. Each context offers theological witness—that synodality is a pastoral conversion to walk together, listening to the Spirit who speaks through all the baptized.

Question to the Holy Father

The role of Continental Synodal Teams has been highlighted throughout the synodal journey, particularly in the implementation phase. Do you anticipate that the role of groupings of Churches —such as Continental Bishops' Conferences, national or regional Bishops' Conferences, and Ecclesiastical Provinces—will continue to grow in the life of the Church?