

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEACONS

Deacons going into the deep – Speak Lord, Your Servant is listening

Michael Tan
Chair

Pictured are from below, Michael Tan, Bishop Vincent Long and Deacon Tony Hoban with the conference cross and members of the Parramatta diaconal community.

The Parramatta Diaconate Community is delighted and honoured to be hosting the 2022 conference of Australia's deacons from 14 to 16 October 2022 at St. Joseph's Conference and Retreat Centre, Baulkham Hills.

The history of the national deacons' conferences goes back to when Deacon Brian Myers from the Parramatta Diocese, attended a deacons' conference in America in 1994. On his return, Brian was inspired to become involved with organising a gathering of what would become the first of many subsequent National Australian Association of Deacons' conferences.

The theme of the 2022 Conference is "Deacons going into the deep – speak Lord, Your Servant is listening." This theme responds to the call of Bishop Vincent at the Parramatta Diocesan Forum in 2019 to *Go into the Deep*, inviting all in the Diocese to reach out to the margins of society in our ministries. Together with this call to the Parramatta Diocese, the national deacons' conference theme is also a response to the Australian Plenary Council question, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?"

In seeking to be open-hearted in listening to what the Lord is saying to the deacons of Australia at this time in history, the conference theme is a call to be a conference of *diakonia* – i.e. a call to service in response to a deep listening and discernment of what the Lord is saying to the Church in these challenging times of the Plenary Council, the call of safeguarding all in our ministries, as well as to discern how our diaconal ministries need to change and adapt in response to the global COVID19 pandemic.

In preparing for the conference, the deacons of Australia are invited to pray for the Lord to speak to us, as we open our hearts and minds to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us in Australia today. We pray to St. Joseph during this year of St. Joseph, that he may accompany us during 2021 as we prepare for the conference.

The conference theme also invites all deacons in their ministries to be heralds of the Gospel – as the ordination rite states, to 'believe what you read, teach what you believe, practise what you teach.' As the deacon goes on mission into the deep, let us pray that all deacons will continue to be always listening to the Lord who speaks to them, calling them forth to proclaim the Gospel with their lives.

Since the conference will be held soon after the final session of the Plenary Council, the conference will also be a time of discerning and considering how diaconal ministries can serve the needs of a post-Plenary Council Church.

Finally, the Conference will also be a time to consider how the ministry of the deacon can respond in a life-giving way at both local and national levels as we emerge from the global COVID19 pandemic.

Please pray for the deacons of Australia as they prepare for the conference - that St. Joseph, who knew how to be obedient to the voice of God, even though he did not fully understand everything revealed to him, may accompany our deacons during their preparation for the conference.

Anyone who is interested in the Conference can email Michael at mghtan@tpg.com.au

