

Special Assembly for Oceania - Jesus Christ and the Peoples of Oceania:
Walking His Way, Telling His Truth, Living His Life" (22 November-12
December 1998)

Special Assembly for Oceania of the Synod of Bishops

In Session: 22 November - 12 December 1998

Synod Fathers: 117

Topic: "Jesus Christ and the Peoples of Oceania: Walking His Way, Telling His Truth, Living His Life"

The Special Assembly for Oceania was the third continental or regional synodal assembly to be held in the series announced by the Holy Father in the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* as part of the preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. On 7 June 1996 the Holy Father appointed the Pre-Synodal Council made up primarily of bishops from Oceania. In a series of meetings held in Rome and Wellington, New Zealand, this Council offered assistance in drafting the *Lineamenta*, establishing criteria for participation, and finalizing the *Instrumentum Laboris*.

A unique feature of this synodal Assembly was the fact that all bishops of the region were to participate as *ex officio* members. To ease travel difficulties and limit the absence of the bishops from their local Churches, arrangements were made to hold the customary *ad limina* visits in conjunction with the special assembly. Despite the great difference in pastoral situations in the region, many common concerns emerged in the course of Synod work, e.g., inculturation of the Gospel, renewed attention to catechetics and formation, the revitalization of the faith of believers, pastoral care of youth, migrants and native peoples, etc., all of which converged in a concentration on the person of Christ, the way, the truth and the life.

On 11 December, the members of the Special Assembly elected a Post-Synodal Council, to which the Holy Father appointed three members. This Council held a number of meetings to discuss the outcome of the special assembly and to offer assistance to the Holy Father in drafting the *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Oceania"*, promulgated 22 November 2001 at an important, historic ceremony in the Vatican during which the document was simultaneously transmitted on the internet to all the dioceses of the region. *Ecclesia in Oceania* thus became the first papal document to be transmitted by internet in the computer age.

In 2003, the Post-Synodal Council met to begin the process of evaluating the impact and implementation of *Ecclesia in Oceania* in the region, resulting in a report which was sent to the Bishops in Oceania and shared with the Universal Church in 2006. At its February meeting in 2008, the Council members made the decision to hold its next meeting in Australia, in conjunction with the Plenary Assembly of the Federation of the Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania in May, 2010

President-Delegates

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Pio Taofinu'u, S.M., Arcivescovo di Samoa-Apia (Samoa)

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Edward Idris Cassidy, Presidente del Pontificio Consiglio per la Promozione dell'Unità dei Cristiani (Vaticano)

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Thomas Stafford Williams, Arcivescovo di Wellington (Nuova Zelanda)

General Secretary

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Jan Pieter Schotte, C.I.C.M. (Vaticano)

General Rapporteur

S.E.R. Mons. Barry James Hickey, Arcivescovo di Perth (Australia)

Special Secretary

S.E.R. Mons. Michel-Marie-Bernard Calvet, S.M., Arcivescovo di Nouméa (Nuova Caledonia)

Documents of the Special Assembly for Oceania

Esortazione Apostolica post-sinodale *Ecclesia in Oceania* (22 novembre 2001)

[Francese, Inglese, Italiano, Portoghese]

Messaggio dell'Assemblea Speciale del Sinodo dei Vescovi per l'Oceania (10 dicembre 1998)

[Italiano, Spagnolo]

Synodus Episcoporum (Bollettino della Commissione per l'informazione dell'Assemblea Speciale per l'Oceania) [Francese, Inglese, Italiano, Portoghese, Spagnolo, Tedesco]

Instrumentum laboris

[Francese, Inglese]

Lineamenta

[Francese, Inglese]