



**Plenary Council 2020**  
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

# **Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue**

**A Report to the Archdiocese of Hobart**

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## About this Report

The ACBC National Centre for Pastoral Research is pleased to provide you with this report on the Plenary Council project.

The findings in this report are a summary of submissions that were received from your diocese in Phase One of the Plenary Council process called 'Listening and Dialogue'. The National Centre for Pastoral Research was granted ethics approval for the data analysis of this stage in November 2018 through the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Christian Research Association.

The online process for submissions in Phase One opened on 20 May 2018 and ran until 6 March 2019. Due to the high response rate in the last two months, this deadline was extended to 13 March 2019.

The findings in this report include data from all submissions from your diocese that were received online, along with those received via email or in hard copy format, such as letters, books and submissions made through the 2018 Christmas card campaign.

The analysis provided in this report is mainly quantitative in nature and explores the demographic characteristics of individuals and groups that participated in the process. Some examples of these characteristics examined in the report are age, sex, country of birth, location and religion. This analysis was done using Microsoft Excel and SPSS statistical software.

The report also includes a list of themes that were discussed by participants in their submissions related to the question: *What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?* A complete list of themes that were discussed nationally can be found in the report *Listen To What The Spirit Is Saying: Final Report for the Plenary Council Phase I: Listening and Dialogue*. This analysis was done using NVivo software.

Along with the list of themes, we have also included in this report the submissions of participants who consented to have their submission made public as well as released to their diocese. These submissions (made in response to Question 1: *What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?*) are published in full but have been de-identified in keeping with ethical protocols. Several participants made their submission through uploaded documents, while others uploaded additional material as part of their submission. These documents have been provided to the bishop of your diocese in electronic format.

The latter sections of this report contain a sample list of questions received from your diocese in response to Question 2: *What questions about the future of the Church in Australia would you like the Plenary Council to consider?* Along with this, a number of stories of faith or Church are shared, which were submitted by participants in response to Question 3: *Would you like to share a story about your experience of faith or of the Church in Australia that has shaped you?*

We hope you find this report insightful and helpful as we continue our work on the project.

Trudy Dantis

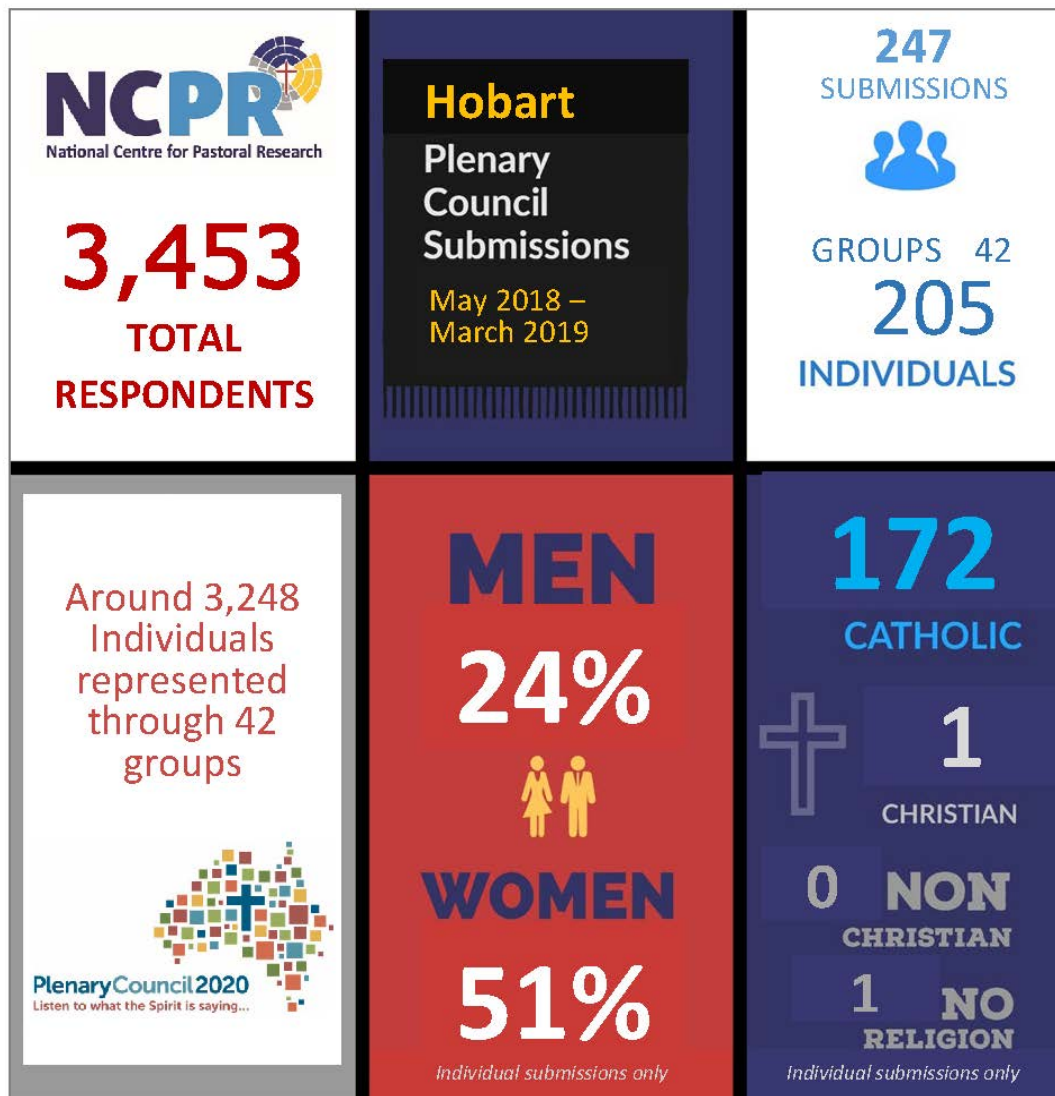
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## Diocesan Submissions Summary Snapshot: May 2018—March 2019



## Number of Submissions Received - all Australia

Across Australia, we received a total of 17,457 completed submissions from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 9,690 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue encounter. Another 2,113 were unsure if they had, so we presume they had not. Less than 26 per cent of the total number of respondents (4,402) indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 17,457 submissions, 4,699 were from groups or organisations and 12,758 submissions were from individuals. There were over 209,170 people represented through the 4,699 groups, bringing the total number of participants in the “Listening and Dialogue” process to over 222,000.

## Number of Submissions Received - Hobart

The Plenary Council questionnaire did not ask respondents for the diocese in which they were located. However, it asked participants to type in their postcode. These postcodes were used as a basis for this analysis.

From the Archdiocese of Hobart, we received a total of 247 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 140 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 37 were unsure if they had. About 67 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 247 submissions, 42 submissions were from groups or organisations and 205 submissions were from individuals. There were 3,248 people represented through the 42 groups. It is important to note, however, that not all groups completed this question, so total group numbers may be under-represented.

Overall, the total number of respondents from your diocese was 3,453.

<b>Table 1: Number of Submissions</b>	
<b>Total number of submissions received</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Participated in Listening &amp; Dialogue Encounter?</b>	
Yes	140
No	67
Not sure	37
Not stated	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>
Submissions received from groups or organisations	42
Submissions received from individuals	205
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 205 individual submissions had been received from your diocese. Most of the individual submissions were made online. However, a number were also received through letters, emails and the Christmas card campaign.

### Age of Respondents

Table 2 shows the ages of individual respondents from Hobart. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 50 per cent (102) were received from those aged 50 and over. The most number of submissions within this age range were received from the 70-74 years age group (21 responses).

At the close of submissions, there were only ten individual submissions received from those aged under 25.

Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were five individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

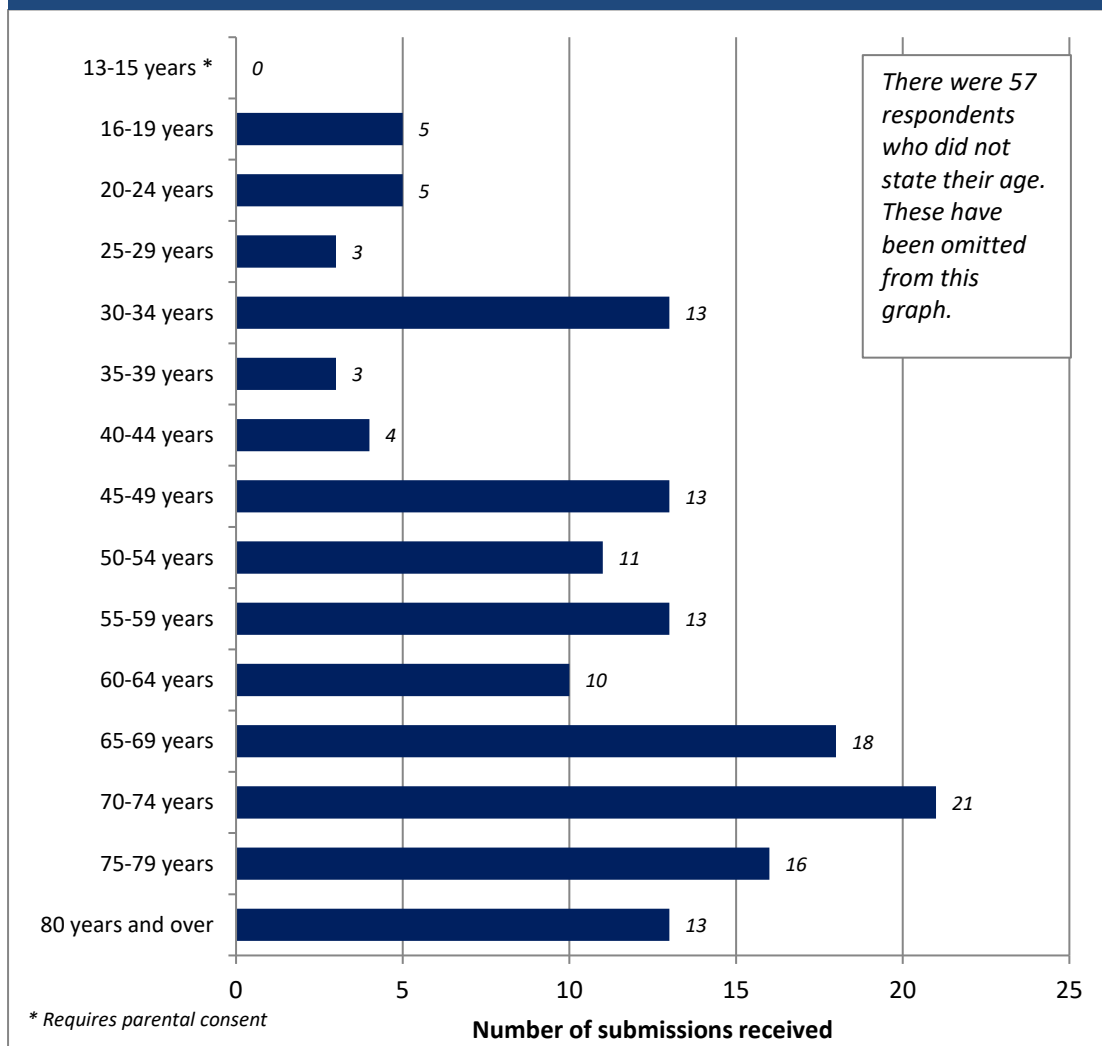
Participants aged 13-15 years were prompted to provide their parent or guardian's email address. An email was then automatically sent to seek consent for their child to participate in the study. There were no individual submissions made from this age group in your diocese.

**Table 2: Age groups (*individual responses only*)**

13-15 years *	0
16-19 years	5
20-24 years	5
25-29 years	3
30-34 years	13
35-39 years	3
40-44 years	4
45-49 years	13
50-54 years	11
55-59 years	13
60-64 years	10
65-69 years	18
70-74 years	21
75-79 years	16
80 years and over	13
Not stated	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>

*\* Requires parental consent*



**Fig. 1: Age groups (individual responses only)**

## Sex of Respondents

A little over half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (51%), while a further 24 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 50 men and 105 women who made submissions. Twenty-three respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 27 respondents did not answer this question.

**Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)**

Female	105
Male	50
Prefer not to say	23
Not stated	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>

## Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (59%) were born in Australia. Just over 13 per cent came from other countries, while around 28 per cent did not state their birthplace. See *Appendix 1* for the full list of countries of birth. Table 4b provides a summary of the countries of birth by English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries\*, while Tables 4c and 4d indicate the countries of birth of the respondent's mother and father respectively.

<b>Table 4a: Countries of birth (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	120	58.5
Ireland	3	1.5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	8	3.9
Other Countries	16	7.8
Not stated	58	28.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	120	58.5
Other English-speaking country	14	6.8
Non-English-speaking country	13	6.3
Not stated	58	28.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	93	45.4
Other English speaking country	20	9.8
Non-English speaking country	27	13.2
Not stated	65	31.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	97	47.3
Other English-speaking country	19	9.3
Non-English-speaking country	22	10.7
Not stated	67	32.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Other than Australia, English-speaking countries refer to New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, United States, Canada and South Africa. All other countries are designated as non-English-speaking countries.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Table 5 shows the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from your diocese who made submissions. At the close of submissions there were no individuals who identified themselves in this way.

<b>Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (individual responses only)</b>	
Yes	0
No	150
Not stated	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>

## Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 205 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 172 respondents (84%) were Catholic. One respondent was from another Christian denomination while there were none from non-Christian religions. A further 31 respondents did not state their religion and one respondent chose the 'no religion' response.

<b>Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)</b>		<b>Person</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Catholic		172	83.9
<b>Other Christian:</b>			
Anglican		1	0.5
Other Christian		0	0.0
<b>Non Christian:</b>			
Other religion		0	0.0
No religion		1	0.5
Not stated		31	15.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>

For those who indicated that they were Catholic, a further question asked them to describe their participation in church activities. Their responses are shown in Table 7. A total of 149 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 15 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while two respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further six respondents described themselves in another way.

<b>Table 7: Religious description</b> (for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)				
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Not stated</b>	<b>Total</b>
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	85	44	20	149
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	9	2	4	15
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	0	0	1	1
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	1	0	0	1
Other	4	2	0	6
Not stated	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>172</b>

## GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 42 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 3,248 individuals were represented through these groups. However, five groups did not report their number of participating members, indicating that the total number of people represented through the group submissions may be higher.

While 36 group submissions provided a group name, six did not do so. Table 8 shows a list of the Top 20 group submissions from the diocese with the number of members in each group. A complete list of groups is provided as *Appendix 2*. Groups that did not provide a name were omitted from this table. The number of participating members was provided by the person submitting the group response. These figures could not be checked for accuracy.

Prominent among the largest groups was Sacred Heart College New Town Tasmania with around 440 members. There were also a number of other parish groups such as the Burnie Wynyard parish Group 1 with 350 participants and Immaculata Community (1) with 213 members. There were 13 other groups with ten members or more.

**Table 8 : Group submissions from the diocese**

Name of group	Group size
Sacred Heart College New Town Tasmania	440
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 1	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 2	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 3	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 4	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 5	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 6	350
Immaculata Community (1)	213
St Therese of Lisieux Moonah Lutana Parish	125
Sacred Heart College New Town Tasmania	80
St John's Catholic Parish, Richmond Tas.	61
St. John the Baptist (inclusive of St. Monicas	29
Launceston Parishioners	18
Launceston Parishioners	18
Mersey Leven Parish Small Group	15
Immaculata Community (2)	10
Parish Group Launceston	9
Thursday Morning L& D Group, Kings Meadows Catholic Parish	9
Friday Morning L & D Group, Kings Meadows Catholic Parish	9
Tasmanian Social Justice Group	8

## Age and Sex of Group Members

On 5 November 2018, a question was added to the survey asking group respondents to estimate the ages and sex of members represented in their group. Not all groups answered this question. Therefore, the results presented here reflect only the submissions of those groups which provided information to this question between 5 November 2018 and 13 March 2019. Table 9 shows the ages of group members for those submissions.

The Under 20 years age group was the largest group represented with 500 members. This was followed by the group aged 50-69 with 172 members. There was no age provided for around 2,467 group members.

<b>Table 9: Estimates of ages of people in group submissions</b>	
<i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Under 20 years	500
20 - 29 years	156
30 - 49 years	155
50 - 69 years	172
70 and over	129
Unknown	2,467
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,579</b>

*Totals in tables 9 & 10 will not always agree due to submission errors.*

Of the total 3,230 group members whose sex was reported, 57 per cent (1,836) were female and 43 per cent (1,394) were male.

<b>Table 10: Estimates of sex of people in group submissions</b>	
<i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Female	1,836
Male	1,394
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,230</b>

*Totals in tables 9 & 10 will not always agree due to submission errors.*



## RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1

*What do you think God is  
asking of us  
in Australia at this time?*

## THEMES DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

A number of themes emerged nationally in Phase One of the Plenary Council project. These are described in the national report titled, *Listen to What the Spirit is Saying: Final Report for the Plenary Council Phase I: Listening and Dialogue* published in July 2019.

A wide range of themes were discussed in the submissions from groups and individuals in your dioceses. The most prominent ones are listed below. For a detailed analysis of each of these themes please refer to the **national report**. We have provided references to the report by way of chapter and page numbers for this purpose.

The top four topics discussed by participants from your diocese were:

- Leadership and Church governance
- Love God, Love neighbour
- Sacraments
- Social Justice and the Environment

Within each of these four areas, the most widely discussed themes were as follows:

- Leadership and Church governance (Chapter 7)
  - *Greater role for women* (p. 83)
  - *Greater leadership from bishops* (p. 87)
  - *Ending clericalism* (p. 80)
  - *New leadership and governance model* (p. 91)
  - *Greater leadership from priests* (p. 88)
  - *Greater involvement of the laity* (p. 84)
  - *Servant leadership* (p. 82)
- Love God, Love neighbour (Chapter 4)
  - *Greater focus on Jesus Christ* (p. 30)
  - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God* (p. 29)
  - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching* (p. 32)
    - *Emphasis on Church teachings on marriage*
  - *Better faith formation* (p. 38)
  - *Care for neighbour* (p. 36)
  - *Greater focus on the Word of God* (p. 31)
- Sacraments (Chapter 6)
  - *Holy Orders - Ending celibacy/ allowing priests to marry* (p. 66)
  - *Greater emphasis on prayer and sacraments* (p. 64)
  - *Restoring the Third Rite of Reconciliation* (p. 75)
  - *Holy Orders - Ordination of women* (p. 69)
- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
  - *Greater Inclusion of all* (p. 108)
  - *Fighting for human rights issues* (p. 110)
  - *Care for the environment* (p. 112)



- *Ending discrimination of LGBTI (p. 110)*

Other main themes that emerged from the responses from your diocese included:

- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *Sharing the faith with others (p. 128)*
- *The Mass – Eucharistic Adoration (p. 51)*
- *Stronger parish communities (p. 156)*
- *Listening to one another more (p. 136)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p.151)*
- *More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse (p. 102)*
- *Inclusion of the divorced and remarried (p. 46)*
- *Greater concern for victims and survivors (p. 101)*
- *Listening to the laity (p. 138)*
- *Communion for all (p. 49)*
- *Different translation of the Mass - emphasis on inclusive language (p. 56)*

## SUBMISSIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

The submissions in this section were made in response to the first question: *What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?*

In keeping with ethics guidelines of the online survey, the privacy of each participant was protected under the Privacy Act 1988. Due to the personal and detailed nature of the submissions, consent was sought to conduct any follow-up consultation and for publishing of the findings.

Care was taken, therefore, to obtain informed consent from each participant or group/organisation in three distinct areas. Firstly, whether they wished to have a member of the Plenary Council team contact them about their submission. Secondly, consent was obtained for the publishing of their de-identified submission online, via the Plenary Council website or through social media. De-identification is the process used to prevent a person's identity from being revealed. In this survey, this meant that all names, locations and other identifying information were removed prior to the response being used. Finally, consent was also sought for sharing their de-identified submission with their diocese.

In keeping with these guidelines therefore, the submissions that follow are only from those individuals or groups who consented to having their submission being made public and being shared with their diocese. About 30 per cent of all responses did not have consent for one or both of these criteria and therefore, their submissions have not been included here.

To find what the Church in Australia is required to do to involve the laity in increasing its relevance God wants his people to be involved not just to be told by bishops what to do. The Church is for all not just a chosen few. Leaders are needed to guide us not control us.

To answer the call of a "change of heart".

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Keep up loving communications and relationships at all levels. Encourage all forms of prayer and meditation. Combine churches and schools, even if one has to close down. Allow priests to marry. Mass homilies to be educational in understood English. Parishioners to be encouraged to form small groups to get to know each other. Liturgy of the Word to be used more frequently, rather than importing foreign priests. Be cautious about lobby groups like—Homosexual, Feminist, Social Justice etc. Bible Studies and Breaking of Bread to be encouraged in homes and small groups. Invite all to Communion at Mass. Allow Third Rite for Confessions for all to participate. Let community choose bishops and priests.

An inclusive, gospel-focussed Church, which has moral courage in advocating for the poor and marginalised and is welcoming migrants and refugees. A big-hearted Church.

To be a listening, humble and inclusive Church. Making time to pray more and exercise compassion towards all without prejudice based on sexuality. Enable the third rite of reconciliation. Be open to dialogue about Church doctrine in a 21st Century context free of judgment about heresy. Involve all the baptised in the appointment of bishops. Provide genuine opportunities for women to be involved in Church governance. End the centuries

of unaccountable clericalism and expect of our clergy a genuine commitment to ongoing formation and regular supervision.

"Come back to me!!" I believe that our clergy and our Mass celebrations (particularly in Western/Educated Countries) have drifted so far away from what God expects of us. Remember how Jesus lost his temper and trashed the synagogue in disgust with what was happening in his beloved temple. Our current religious leaders have put themselves so far above the ordinary people...Do I really have to kiss the ring of a Bishop? They are different in the way they dress... (too many fine robes...Jesus did not dress this way) and in the way they speak... (what does consubstantial really mean??). Our priests need to LIVE like we do...They need to have the opportunity to marry and have children if they wish. Women need to have the opportunity to become priests...after all it is our Holy Mother Mary (not St. Peter) who has appeared to us AND TEACHES US in apparitions around the world. It is women (not men) that currently make-up the falling Sunday Mass attendance in Australia...and yet we still cannot give them a priestly role in our dying church. Because of all this AND so many cases of sexual abuse...WE the people have lost faith...Not in God, but in our Church. I believe that changes are required in Australia, but I also understand that NOTHING will really happen unless it is approved in Rome. THIS IS MY PRAYER!!

That as a Catholic community to show our heartfelt support to all those who have suffered abuse at the hands of clergy whether it be sexual, physical or emotional. To come together as a community, as Australian Catholics and to offer a Mass in sympathy and support and to maybe hold this Mass once a year on a "sorry day" for those who have been so let down by the Catholic Church. Also to pray for all Catholics who just feel so let down by the Church—by the men in particular in positions of power who were too afraid to act with compassion on behalf of the innocent children.

We encounter God in encounter with the marginalised.

We really need to listen to our Catholic community, and take on board the input from the wider community in regards to the feeling of disengagement; what is the Church that we would like to be a part of; what are some obstacles and impediments for current engagement; identify the current attractions that support the passion. The young person needs a voice in this process, as much as the current regular Mass attendee. Perhaps aspects of the Church may need to collapse—opening the possibility of reimagining aspects as a source of spiritual growth/enlightenment. Our faith needs to be seen in action, with works associated with Christs example, the common good. Investigation of putting energy into the support of outreach programs (Alpha?). The maintenance and enhancement of a faith-filled community that values aspects of free expression based on Christs teachings to enhance and invigorate a real sense of a community of shared beliefs, mutually supported actions and a consensus on important interpretations that those outside the Catholic community recognise as being faith-filled.

God is asking us to reach out and welcome all to the table without conditions. The rhetoric of the Catholic Church needs to cease judging/categorising people and trying to change them into their own image rather than Gods image i.e. come as you are just as I made you. Moving away from trying to fix people —they are not broken e.g. God is asking us to make our celebrations/rituals more relevant especially to our young people—listen to the

needs of our young people and what they need. Focus on Social Justice through actions. Can we wipe the history of the Catholic Church and re -imagine the Church from the time of Jesus—what would that look like?
Can the plenary council explore ways to spread the gospel in a contemporary Australia?
God is asking us to "look after our neighbour". What does this mean? It means that we need to respect each other as Jesus taught us. We need to look after the marginalised, whether this is the poor (spirituality, physically, emotionally), refugees or elderly. We need to be carers of the environment for both now and the future.
We contemplated the need for a Church that actively demonstrates a deep respect of all through its actions. This is by welcoming all to Gods family. The role of women in the Church going forward. To be inclusive, putting people before the institution. Our Church needs to respond the local community. A genuine focus on the following questions: What is the purpose of Church, who is it for? How can we allow all people to be actively involved? He wants us to love.
It is clear that the Church is undergoing a radical change. The problem is will it listen to the people and consequently, the Holy Spirit, who seems to way ahead of where the hierarchy are at. In other words, listen, listen, listen. The world has moved on!
I feel like God is asking Australia to continue being a refuge for people from all over the world who share our values and way of life.
To listen to people properly. To not let bishops ruin everything the Church is. To respond to modern times and recover all the lost Catholics.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* For the Church to be more open and inclusive.</li> <li>* Valuing women and lay leaders within the Church.</li> <li>* Rediscover the life and joy within the Church. A place for people to feel comfortable and at home, to find like-minded people.</li> <li>* Eucharistic hospitality—everyone welcome to Eucharist, including divorcees and gay couples. Too excluding following divorce or belonging to a minority group.</li> <li>* Less onerous process for divorced people to remarry.</li> <li>* Rules and traditions too set in concrete—need more flexibility and fluidity.</li> <li>* Healing the hurt of all people in the Church, not just sexual abuse victims.</li> <li>* Change of stance on birth control needed.</li> <li>* How does the Church regain its relevance / currency in the community?</li> <li>* Creed— consubstantial not relevant and doesnt fit with the rest of the wording. Chan ge from for us men &amp; for our salvation —possible to remove men? Change from Holy Catholic Church to Universal Church?</li> <li>* Change from clericalism to time for the laity—another glass ceiling.</li> </ul>
Practice to be active good apostles within community, be compassionate to migrants and refugees. Keep open hearts and minds to God. Be resilient to conflict. There is no room

for materialistic attitudes. Self-sacrifice—let go and let God. Be more inclusive. Communicate with those who no longer attend Church and learn their concerns and barriers causing their non-attendance. Action through prayer.

I believe God wants our Catholic community to work together to demonstrate gently to others, the wonder of God's love in bringing us together as community. However, I further believe we need desperately to be assisted to understand the work of Jesus Christ in His beautifully simplistic style of teaching, just what a wonderful gift He has left us in Himself in the Eucharist. If that miracle could be understood there would be a deluge of people every time Mass was celebrated. The Church as a whole is hurting because of sexual sin and many Catholics believe that gay marriage is okay, well our Catholic teaching and the Bible describe it as mortal sin, how confusing for young ones. Get God's word back into our schools and churches and demonstrate as educated priests and lay people of faith can, that there are no deviations from what we were taught by Jesus Christ in His non-academic and beautifully simplistic way to be understood by everyone who cared to listen. People are crying out for the Word of God but many don't know. Let's show them, because we know, sadly many of our bishops and priests don't know and are so puffed up with their own importance, they have abandoned the reality of God and the Holy Spirit's ability in guiding the church they govern. Lay people are more "in touch with the reality of the Holy Spirit" than the clergy. God wants us to turn to Him for our every need. The examples we see of the clergy is hardly edifying to most of us and we therefore have little or no respect for them to our shame. Our Catholic Faith is a gift directly from God and it has been downgraded by the bishops, to that of a business!! Sadly this is also reflected in our parishes. God cannot be bought by building new churches and knowingly permitting the poor and marginalised to go hungry. FEED MY SHEEP Jesus said.

The inspirations which come to me are: Listen to My Mother, Strengthen My people with the Truth, Music and Joy, and Follow the precepts of My Church and My Priests—Speak Up and Out! Other thoughts which concern me in the Church are: Don't change the Mass words. I have noticed a significant alteration of wording in Sunday Mass where the gospel reading has been adjusted to suit modern tastes i.e. removing mankind and replacing it with people. Also, we have regular weekday Masses with local school children (marvellous) but the Mass format has been altered with the new responses on overheads and in my opinion, very badly placed so that the Holy Mass is not flowing properly and there are added responses before the consecration which make the wording very awkward. Also the music chosen for the children is meaningless—the children need to be inspired by words and music that challenges their vocabulary, not dumb it down. There is also an urgent need, as always to invite new people into the Church or encourage non-practicing Catholics to return. This requires a new look at social activity outside the Mass. Please don't change the Mass to resemble Hill Street style church gatherings but offer lots of social activity outside the Mass. Many converts to the Church have remarked that they were very impressed with the reverence shown in the church, during Mass, adoration etc. This is very important and underlines the truth that Our Lord is present in the tabernacle and on the altar during consecration.... Many thanks and God Bless.

A change of emphasis as the modern Church appears to be ignoring peoples need to worship, and the emphasis to have shifted from worshipping God to worshipping instead the people. In other word emphasising the profane above the sacred.
I think God is calling us to return to Him as the source of all grace. I believe He wants us to promote Eucharistic adoration, reverent liturgy with good music as oppose to a lot of the banal dubious hymns we tend to sing now and have a real focus on prayer. I think that Catholic education needs a total overhaul. We have a need for solid formation in the faith, especially for the young but also for adults. Catholic schools have many teachers who are really just nominal Catholics and so we cant expect that they will be able to transfer the faith in any dynamic way so just continuing the widespread attenuation of faith. Our evangelisation efforts first need to concentrate on our current parishioners so that we have a vibrant faith community to then reach out to others from. I think we need to have very practical formation and support especially for the young in the areas of teaching about sexuality, contraception etc. for example-teaching natural family planning in high schools, discussions about chastity and all its challenges. Our young are being left adrift with hardly any support in this area with all the voices of secular society loudly proclaiming the opposite of the Churchs message with very little done to stand against this.
To love each other despite our differences. To welcome and include all people into our Church community. This means not only culture and race but sexuality. We must share Catholic values of love, forgiveness and hope, not gender, education or social status.
Consistory of Cardinals for the election of the next Pontiff; Consistory of Cardinals for the appointment of a new Cardinal of each capital city as Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Darwin, Canberra and Hobart; Any homeless rough sleeper to be hosted in the Bishops House of each capital city and or similar religious denomination retreat, until suitable employment found; Any jobless within any parish to be given immediate employment, full time, permanent for life no ifs, no buts.
To support Pope Francis in his thinking regarding divorced and re-married and communion. Bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation. Accept optional celibacy for diocesan priests.
To be a Church of servant leaders, not one in which the clergy, particularly the hierarchy and institutional Church, use "power over" the People of God and do not hear their voice.
<p>To rebuild our Church based on fundamental Gospel values—love (of God and our neighbours—all of them), respect, servant leadership, option for the poor and disadvantaged, justice, honesty, and inclusiveness.... ALL of us should be taking on our baptismal responsibility as part of the pilgrim people of God to work for the kingdom here in our world. This calls for more lay leadership, perhaps with lay leaders caring for small communities, leaving the priest to be the moderator over these communities. While so many have just “given up”, perseverance and commitment is essential—it is just too important to let go.</p> <p>To be an inclusive and welcoming community using the gifts and talents of all, especially women. As over 50% of the Church community, women have also been called by baptism to work for God’s kingdom in our world.</p>



## 1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? To be a Church which respects “sensus fidei”—that we ALL form the pilgrim people of God. Everybody—lay, clergy and hierarchy—should be listened to and their views and wisdom respected and considered. Our pastors should be shepherds, not authoritarian, and we yearn for bishops/archbishops whom we can respect and who are more consultative and accountable for their actions.

God is asking us to carry out the Mission of Jesus Christ to bring Good news to the poor, liberty to captives and sight to the blind and to make visible the Kingdom of love, peace, forgiveness and inclusion that Jesus came to announce to the world. This means being open to the needs of the world for healing, dialogue, understanding and human/spiritual fulfilment. This means the Church needs to be welcoming and open to the signs of our own times, the wounds and challenges of this world, not the world of the 1940s or 50s. The signs of the times are very clear: They include: care for the devastated earth as Gods gift to be shared and cherished by all; care for the abandoned especially those seeking safety from war, poverty and oppression; love for and acceptance of those who are not of the mainstream (e.g. people of different sexual orientation. ethnic background); Church governance that includes the laity and especially women who have never been part of the clergy who hold the governance structures; and outreach to youth.

Adapt to the new world. Continue your teachings but find new ways to really connect with people of the world. Youth do not want to sit in a church and listen. They want something more to them.

- We felt that God was asking for a shift, for conversion of the Church in Australia, so that it became a truly welcoming church and let go of its tribalism and exceptionalism.
- We felt that God was calling us as Pope Francis has indicated to embrace the poor and vulnerable as its priority, to accept the excluded ones (e.g. LGBTQ) and embrace all of creation in real and demonstrable ways.
- We felt the Church in Australia gave more attention to ritual and less attention to relationships; that its gaze was too much on the sanctuary and not, as a loving God would hope, towards society;
- We hoped the Church would keep its historic mission to educate against poverty and fundamentalism and minister to the sick and dying in a holistic way;
- In Australia today we wished that leaders in the Church would, like the Pope, provide moral leadership and shine a light on the dark places of poverty and exclusion in our country, and announce the Good News that welcomes the marginalised, the homeless and the rejected (especially our original inhabitants and the refugees);
- We felt that God was repeating “Do not be afraid”.

God is asking us to work on outreach and to put in place situations where people of all faiths and religions feel safe to look at Christs teachings in a Catholic environment...in particular, the Church needs to harness and make available open welcoming environments for people to look at contemplative and meditative practice... Many Catholics have abandoned the Church and gone to Eastern meditation based prayer and practice....

1. a renewed spirituality that focuses on deep personal relationship with God for all (clergy and faithful)—we have been in danger of making an idol of the Church, rather than focusing on encounter with God.

2 a developed understanding of the example of Jesus (e.g. inclusive, humble, non-judgemental). We have too often only taken the words of Jesus as written in Scripture as Gospel rather than the behaviour of Jesus

3. Inclusion: table hospitality esp. for divorced and remarried; those in committed gay relationships; non-Catholic spouses who regularly attend Mass

4. A complete renewal of Catholic expression of faith in matters pertaining to women; lay ministry; public worship; language etc. The Church needs to become relevant in the Australian culture, but this is not possible with exclusive language & practise, clericalism, 2nd class status of laity; attitudes to women; liturgical prayer that does not speak to Australian culture and leaves unchurched and non-Catholics bewildered. (How can we possibly hope to evangelise under these circumstances?)

5. A deeper identification with the poor by challenging the consumerism of Catholics in all areas including environment—how different are Catholics really from the rest of society? Bishops and clergy can lead in this area by example and exhortations.

6. The only way we will recover from the absolute scandal of sexual abuse, and all other failings such as clericalism, cover-ups etc. is to live as Jesus lived, rather than as a feudal society. The task is to allure each Catholic to truly live our faith in mature and deep relationship with God—who is the only one who can bring the Church to true life. The focus of the task is not to regain credibility in the face of public scorn and mistrust but to live authentically as mature Christians. The only way we can be attractive to others is by our authenticity—living with deep commitment to loving one another by respecting all as equal regardless of race, gender, sexuality, creed; commitment to social justice esp. regarding the poor and First Nations. A commitment to renewal/deepening of relationship with God is the best way to begin the process.

God has given every one of us particular skills and talents and yet there is only a tiny group of people (i.e. priests/bishops) who are able to use their skills for leadership. The laity, and in particular, women, are excluded from leadership. In many parishes it's still a case of the role of the laity is to "pay, pray, obey". Parish councils and archdiocesan councils should have much more authority. Too many priests and bishops act as autocrats. If a priest or bishop is leading their flock poorly, then they should be challenged and if they refuse to change their style then they should be replaced. (And not simply moved to another unsuspecting parish/diocese.) Perhaps regular "performance reviews" or reviews triggered by complaints. Currently, for example, if a diocese is ruled (rather than led) by a bishop who is determined to undermine decades of good work and return the diocese to pre-Vatican II days, there is nothing the people can do about it. This is simply wicked and shows a total lack of respect for the people of God. Married men and women who are called to priesthood should be nurtured rather than rejected, particular when the only option seems to be importing priests from other countries. These men often have accents that are so strong as to make it impossible to understand them. They simply cannot "break open the word" when their congregation can't understand them. We have



ample men and women who can do this beautifully, but we reject them, brutally, cruelly. The trend back to pre-Vatican II clericalism and triumphalism is alarming and shameful. More focus on living the beatitudes, less focus on piety and ostentatious displays of opulence. A reminder that Christ lives in the poor and marginalised, not only in the Eucharist. It would also be wonderful if more parishes picked up *Laudato Si'* as climate change is probably the greatest threat to the world.

Restructure the power positions. Get rid of clericalism. Give laity a voice and powerful role. Congregations should have the power to hire and fire their priests.

To be patient. With the Church and with each other. There are a lot of changes taking place within our Church in Australia and all around the world. I think that he is asking us to come together as a Church, as a community and as a wider Catholic family. When people are met with change a lot run in fear or speak out in fear, in anger. I think that instead we need to realise that no matter the change, our values don't falter. We will always have that in common and instead of isolating ourselves in fear of what is to come. We should be embracing each other, we should stand together as a Catholic family and know that what's coming is better than what is gone if we face it together, with God beside us.

Inclusive of the marginalised: Divorced, LGBTI, mentally ill, migrants, refugees. We must build our understanding of these groupings who are realities in our community and establish ways of connecting with them, meeting their needs and including them in our worship. Welcoming: visitors and occasional attenders ought to be welcomed openly and without judgement. Ministries and even pews are not the possession of the regular attenders. Community: investing time and effort in getting to know each other, building links with other churches and community groups.

Some anecdotes from our parish sessions:

- I was not comfortable to sign petition at Church against gay marriage as I believe this to be against the Gospel of love.
- I work with and encounter people who are gay in the workplace, and welcome them, why not in my church?
- Divorcee—rules don't allow me to be a part of their Church, but "bugger them" this is my Church. I don't feel like that in this parish but it was a big issue for me and it took a lot to get to that point
- I'm not married, not a nun, I'm not gay but the Church doesn't know how to deal with us. Good for cleaning, flower arranging but neither a mother nor nun! I just sail on regardless. I don't fit in. Church doesn't include me in its family. Broader sense of welcome in small country parish.
- First visit to this church, knelt in prayer, someone stood over me and said "This is my seat."

We believe God is asking us to align Church governance with this vision of an inclusive, welcoming community taking into consideration the following points:

- The Church seems to hide behind Canon Law, particularly in response to the Royal Commission and with regard to processes and procedures for responding to sexual abuse of children.
- Canon Law and International humanitarian law seem to be in conflict. Pope Francis is seeking to bring more alignment. How can we support, enable and live this?
- Baptism is the foundational sacrament in the life of the Church, not Holy Orders. We need ways of reflecting this reality in Church governance: pastoral councils at parish and diocesan level with real power acting in concert with the parish priest or bishop; canvassing the views of the community in consultative and collaborative ways;
- Professional development of priests and those in ministry. Reflective practise, spiritual growth and formation, professional supervision, providing feedback and respectful critique of the ministry of the priest.
- Move closer to the message of Jesus to “Love one another as I have loved you.”
- Living with humility: a Church which serves rather than exercising power, as demonstrated by Pope Francis
- The Catholic Church does not seem to present as Christian!
- This Plenary Council demonstrating that the Australian Bishops have the capacity to listen and the courage to act.

Part A What is God asking of me? (in addition to the usual be perfect)

- a) Increase my depth of knowledge of the faith, particularly of the Church’s social teachings.
- b) Be better prepared to explain my take on social issues, such as Sheridan has done in his book God is Good for You.
- c) Remain alert for attempts to restrict our ability to pass the Church’s undiluted teachings on to our children, grandchildren, neighbours, etc.

Part B What is God asking (in my opinion) of those whom God has chosen to help and guide me and my neighbours?

- a) More forcefully remind parents of their obligation to teach the basics of the faith to their children, an obligation which cannot be subcontracted.
- b) Try to reduce the rate of abandonment of their faith by school-leavers. Ensure effective religious education in the school is refreshed routinely in Sunday homilies.
- c) By forthrightly teaching that adultery is always evil and marriage is for life, stop Australian dioceses replicating the decisions in favour of ‘niceness’ taken in Malta and several dioceses in the Americas and Europe.

Part C I think God is asking each of us to use our individual talents. Being a retired aviation professional, I have a suggestion regarding papal air travel. Future papal aircraft

should be equipped with only five seats: Holy Father, 1 secretary, 1 cabin attendant and 1 pilot. Can you see who are missing?

What God is asking of us in Australia has not changed in any given time. God wants us to live with love and compassion in truth, justice and peace. Every bit of the above is entwined with God's love and underpins our very existence on planet Earth. How we look after our common global home is integral to all life on earth and we have been merciless with God's creation. This is a request to acknowledge our environment as requiring urgent attention. All living things are interrelated and interdependent and as such cannot be considered anything less. Much has been written within the Church on the responsibility of our stewardship for Earth but there is no follow through. Pope Francis in 2015 gave us and the world his thorough and inspiring encyclical "Laudato Si". We should be running with it. Instead the years go on and we are not witness to an encouraging response from within the Australian Church to the pope's plea to urgent action. There is no visible spiritual leadership from the Australian Catholic Church that is actively mobilising action throughout the archdioceses to shifting complacency and inaction. Why? It is not enough to have well written documents, making statements, having recommended reading and handouts. The press in our archdiocese anyway gives scant space to the environment. We have been all of us well aware of the gravity of the environmental problems facing Earth and humanity for many years. Why the delay? Do we care? What about our responsibility to future generations. As Catholics we are all in this together, believers and nonbelievers. The Church takes a serious stand on the sanctity of life. There is no disconnect with the right to life of all creation. Please listen to Indigenous voices. They understand this reverential kinship with the environment. 'Our spirituality is a oneness and interconnectedness with all that lives and breathers, even with all that does not live and breathe'... Mudrooroo 'Only when the last tree has died, the last river been poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realise we cannot eat money.' Cree proverb: Loving care of our Earth home is love of humanity and love of God and that is what God is asking of us in Australia at this time.

I feel God is asking us to be a more open Church which is in tune with the concerns of modern day life and the concerns of the future of our planet.

We believe that this is what God is asking of us in Australia at this time

1. Prayer and the Sacramental life of the Church: An increase of prayer through the following means:

- a. Eucharistic Adoration: For Churches to offer daily holy hours or where possible, perpetual Eucharistic Adoration to grow deeper in faith.
- b. Availability of the Sacraments: For more weekday Masses for those who have work, Confession and formation about what the Sacraments are.
- c. Scriptural foundations: more bible studies preferably targeted to specific age groups, especially in Catholic Schools and in SRE teaching in public schools.
- d. Devotion to Mary: Greater devotion to Mary particularly through the rosary in parishes with guided Scripture meditations and solid and comprehensive teachings about Mary.

2. Formation and Catechesis: renewal in Sacramental programs, financial support and an emphasis that the Catholic faith is a relationship instead of something you just learn

a. Substantial content regarding doctrines and teachings of the Church. So that young people can really have something to hold on to and refer to Catechism of the Catholic Church, Scriptures; as well as relevant topics which seem to be neglected but are vital in shaping the culture and individuals: occult/new age movement; sacramentals (as well as providing access to them); gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit (and helping people to discover their own and how to use them); life issues such as euthanasia, abortion, marriage, the 4 last things and what sin is, the universal call to holiness, role of men and women in Church and why women can't be priests. Part of the reason for this call to substance and content is because we desire to know how to defend our faith in secular and relativistic driven society.

b. Support groups: Catered for every stage of life (single, married, men's and women's ministries, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for children) and practical support including parish missions and street evangelisation, healing nights and a call to acknowledge the need for and the reality of healings – this is what we all need and is a big practical way to support to LGBTQI community in a loving way.

3. Catholic Schools: faithfulness to the teachings of the Church and increased formation for Catholic teachers

a. teaching the kerygma

b. Catholic schools ready to be divorced from government funding in order to teach authentic Catholic teaching

c. Adoration and prayer to be available in schools

d. Formation of teachers and investing in retreats, spiritual and human formation for them to grow deeper in faith. Catholic school teachers need to be practicing Catholics/adhere to the truths of the faith for you cannot teach what you are not living—the students will be able to see through this lack of integrity.

e. Catechesis to be taught in schools

f. Catholic high school students to help with Primary School Catechesis

4. Parish life: a. The Parish needs a better sense of community life and this

The global environment should be the world's number one issue. Global warming and the effect on individuals... droughts, starvation, rising water levels will become the greatest global challenge humans face. This issue can unite us all, needs to unite us all, reaches out to the youth, raised individual responsibilities. It is a current issue that builds on the work of Julian Tennison Woods. It connects to Aboriginals and the brokenness of the Church. Einstein suggested that solutions to problems are rarely found in the same paradigm in which they are created... therefore a new focus directed toward healing and

working together is the wisest way forward for the Church.... Thank you for this opportunity... it is a time of healing.

WHAT IS GOD ASKING OF US? I have been praying about this since the plenary conference was called. I believe we should be guided by Micah 6, 8: 'What does the Lord require of you? Only this: To live justly. To love tenderly And to walk humbly with your God. Firstly, I believe the Lord is speaking to Australia as follows:

1. God is asking us to follow Pope Francis' teaching in *Laudato Si'*. We must act to combat climate change, for the sake of the poor of the world, and to protect God's creation. Because of our greed, the beautiful blue planet that the Lord has made our home is no longer very good; it is ravaged and suffering.
2. God is asking us to tenderly love refugees. We must treat asylum seekers with respect, justice and compassion on Manus Island, on Nauru, under guard in Australia or in the community forbidden work or social security. I believe the Lord spoke to Australia on the Sunday of the so-called Tampa election in 2001. The Gospel reading for that Sunday was the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16, 19-31). Our Governments have not yet listened.
3. The Lord is asking us to listen to our Indigenous brothers and sisters and act justly, to address the generational poverty, the history of abuse, the health issues, the appalling incarceration rate and the frightening level of youth suicide.
4. The Church has long provided a prophetic voice against the continuation of death of innocents in the widespread acceptance of procured abortions. The Lord wants us to continue this campaign. Secondly, I believe the Lord is speaking to us (Australian Catholics) through three main voices:

- His Holiness Pope Francis
- The lay people/the 'body' of the Catholic Church in Australia
- The Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse of Children in Institutional Care.

Pope Francis has spoken to us in *Laudato Si'*—asking us to live justly. If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn "realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith". [36] It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions. How has the Church responded to his call re climate change? What practical steps have our dioceses taken in response to this beautiful but demanding encyclical? I can only speak of [ - ], where, frankly, the response in the archdiocese of [ - ] has been invisible. Are our churches using LED lights? Have our schools and churches installed solar panels? Are we planting trees? Are we supporting Caritas' environmental programs?

This goes beyond Church but the Church is part of society and therefore has a significant role to play in achieving these ideals

- To be a more just and compassionate society—not confining this to Australia and Australians but including all peoples

- To recognise the right of every human being to a safe and happy life and to welcome the 'stranger'.
- To honour the dignity of all members of Earth community both human and non-human species
- To be inclusive and to respect and embrace difference in all its manifestations
- To recognise the sacredness of and care for Earth and its peoples
- To honour the dignity of our First Peoples.

To show kindness and compassion for those suffering human rights abuses across the globe and play a role in alleviating their suffering. Particularly extend our wealth to those seeking asylum.

After listening to what God is asking of us, I think He wants us to have leaders who are shepherds of the flock encouraging all the laity to minister to the poor, not using episcopal power to stifle movements with which he does not agree. Our leaders are called to listen to God and to include their people in discussions before implementing the decisions which will affect the faith life of the parishioners. It is vital that Parish Councils are established and consulted.

God is asking us to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him here on earth and be happy with him forever in heaven. And as the prophet Micah told us to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God. GOD made us for Himself and if He allowed his only begotten Son to die for us He wants his Church this Church to remain true by helping us on our journey to eternal life with him. Necessary food for our journey has not changed no matter who we are or where we are. Truth begins and ends with God He always wants us to keep searching for grace through truth. Thank you.

At this crucial time, I believe the Australian Church is being asked to seriously consider Leadership and to embrace Co-Responsibility within it. The universal Church has structures which rely on the bishops in dioceses and priests in local communities—but there are opportunities to develop shared leadership with lay men and women, as well as religious, which extend current "Pastoral Assistant" roles. The benefits of this would assist over-stretched priests, and help parishes and dioceses become more dynamic, life-giving and balanced communities, maximising the diversity of God-given gifts within them. All the baptised, together with ordained priests, are called to share "in the one priesthood of Christ..." Participation in the leadership of the Church, whether at diocesan or parish level is in line with their role of "joining in the offering of the Eucharist...receiving the sacraments in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity" (Lumen Gentium, 10). Together with this enhancement of leadership, it will be necessary to develop strong formation opportunities for people, who after the appropriate discernment, are chosen to devote themselves to serving God & Gods people; and a commitment on their part to be open to ongoing formation ensuring they remain open to how the Holy Spirit is guiding them and their contribution. Social expectations of transparency, responsibility etc., coming out of the recent Royal Commission on abuse of children and institutional responses, can only begin to be met if leadership is renewed in such a way, with a commitment to openness and a spirit of partnership. A separate topic, that of Promotion & Discernment of Vocations, is somewhat connected to the above



suggestion on Leadership. The discernment of Vocations (to the priesthood or religious life) needs to begin from the baptismal vocation to share in Christs priesthood. It seems that this common foundation is often overlooked when promotion of vocations to the Priesthood seems to get most of the priority, with religious life seen as something less, and marriage even further down the line! Perhaps approaches in this area can be reviewed and renewed in such a way as to promote a culture of vocation right throughout the Church.

I believe that God is asking us to turn to Jesus and take him as a model and guide for our lives. Jesus lived a simple life amongst ordinary people. He was one of them. He used their everyday experiences to explain and teach about Gods love. He was a man of love and a man of acceptance. He never turned anyone away. Jesus did not put himself above others. I think God wants the Church to remember the humility that Jesus showed throughout his life. I think the God wants the institution of our Church to reflect Jesus. Over the last 2000 years, the institution of the Church has moved far away from Jesus simple life and way of teaching. I think God tells us the spirit of Jesus has been lost in the machinations of the institution of the Church. God wants us to welcome and accept all, but the institution rejects particular people and it leads people to reject the Church through its institutional complexity. Whilst there are many wonderful individual members of the institution of the Church, the Church as a whole does not relate to the people of Australia in the 21st century. You just need to look around at most Masses on a Sunday to see how few young people attend. God surely wants the Church to reach out to all and create a Church that is relevant and welcoming. I understand that the celebration of the Eucharist is so important in our Catholic Church, but the reality is that Mass holds little meaning to many. I believe God wants us to live the spirit of Jesus through our actions. This means getting out into the community and making this the priority of the Church, not increasing the number of people who attend Church. We need to see success as helping and supporting those on the margins of our society, whether they are Catholic or not, whether they attend Mass or not. Jesus shared his last meal with his followers in a way that related to them and their everyday life. Why can the hierarchy of the Church not see that Mass is not a celebration to which most ordinary Australians can relate? The hierarchy bemoan the low attendance at Mass and yet are unwilling to update this tradition. God is present with us now. God is love now. God is not past traditions. God wants us to follow in Jesus example and be love to the people of today and not yesterday.

For the Church community to give love in forgiveness and humility to forget. To be children of God and embrace in our fathers graces. To shine a light to the world in our darkest times. To be open and transparent to the hurt that has occurred through the Churchs history and use the teachings of the Lord to be an open and inclusive Church. Develop leadership teams within parishes to support clergy with daily to day roles. For the Church to teach the kerygma and be evangelistic. Not to fear change, to stand strong in morals and Social Justice practices. For society to grow in Gods Love and know that he loves everyone. Promote Alpha within the Catholic Context to Catholic Education.

I believe that God is asking us to speak out loudly to the Institutional Church, so that the changes that are imperative for the survival of the Church into the future are implemented. The changes that need to be implemented are in the areas of Clericalism, Social Justice, including, and most importantly, changes to bring justice to survivors of sexual abuse by

clergy, and to ensure that the Church never again enables any form of abuse by clergy to continue. Inequality, particularly the inequality that keeps women from influential positions, and from entering the priesthood. This is a matter of social justice, and requires urgent change. Whilst ever the Church refuses to grant the women of faith equal status with males, the Church is guilty of practicing injustice. The Church needs to move to a position that is truly synodal. The Organisational and Governance Structures of the Church need to be changed so that the laity are fully involved in decision-making processes, so that, as the body of Christ, the laity can fully embrace their responsibility to ensure that the Church is truly Christ-centred, reflecting the gospel principles that Jesus made clear. Evangelisation is an imperative, and this can only occur if the Church makes the necessary changes to bring about true synodality, and equality. The 21st century is a very different world to that in which the Church established its stance on women and the priesthood, celibacy and the governance and organisational structures that have resulted in the protection of the institution of the Church, rather than the people. Inclusion and open acceptance of all, regardless of their marital status and sexual or gender orientation, is also an imperative. The Church needs to move quickly, to bring about change in a timely manner. The laity are impatient—we have waited long enough for the Church to act on all of these issues and more.

I think we, that is, the Catholic Christian community and the wider Australian community, are being asked to be a more compassionate, caring and just society, in the way we treat our Indigenous people, those seeking asylum in our country, those struggling in life and with hardship of every kind. We should also be taking more care of our natural environment and our planet earth.

God is asking us to remember the commandments given to us by Jesus and to act on them. Parts of the Catholic Church have forgotten about the need primarily to love God and our neighbour. Nowhere has this been borne out more significantly than in its response to the sexual abuse allegations. The desire to protect the institution and its staff has led to victims being treated appallingly by the shepherds called on and selected to care for them. The really offensive part of the Church's reaction has been the attempts to cover up the actions of perpetrators and hide them when the only appropriate reaction should have been to care for the victims and ensure the perpetrators were exposed to the full rigour of the secular justice system. The Catholic Church is being asked now to acknowledge humbly and sincerely its faults so that parishioners can be assured the hierarchy is aware of its failures. A public act of penance from the top down is the only hope for claimed sincerity to be believed. Press conferences given by men in purple robes with caps on their heads simply don't convince anyone.

To be a Church which strives to faithfully follow the way of Christ and to live out the mission of Jesus (as in Luke 4) especially regarding social justice for all. We are all the people of God and we all need to take responsibility.

We need to be a Church that prays and draws deeply from the graces of Daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and the Rosary. We are in times where the Church is facing brokenness and suffering and everyone is looking for answers. The Spirit is asking us to listen to the words of the Gospel: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." It is a call not to look to ourselves or others for answers but a radical looking



to Jesus—in prayer. We need charity. To “let (our) love be genuine.” This can only happen when we pray. We cannot be genuine witnesses without a prayer life. Eucharistic Adoration is valuable, because when we sit before God, we are transformed more into His image. We need to be a Church that lives holiness, and prayer helps us to be holy. Without prayer, everything we do would just be an ‘external.’ We can turn to programmes, forgetting the personal dimension, become self-sufficient and lean on our understanding without necessarily realising it. God is calling us to “come back to Him” and this relationship can only be encouraged if Churches are open and have daily Mass, opportunities for retreats and missions. With this comes a need to return to the sacraments—on a true interior level; to go back to the heart of the sacraments, which is an encounter with God. We are called to “Be not afraid” and prayer helps us do this. We can’t be afraid of the mess the Church is in and can’t respond in fear. Fear can bring disillusionment, doubt and a lack of compassion. Prayer helps us to let the Holy Spirit bring healing and mercy to our personal lives and also to the world in tender charity without compromising the truth. We need to be a Church that lives in the Spirit. The Charismatic Renewal has borne so much fruit and has helped so many people encounter God, which has reawakened zeal. It has empowered people to live holiness and the gospel radically by helping them not to be people pleasers but God-pleasers. This also means living in the “supernatural.” The Church has lived too much on the “natural.” An example of this is not having daily Mass. If we really believed in the graces of the Mass, then we would be encouraging this in our culture. Furthermore, we need to emphasise the call for all to be saints and to avoid worldliness in all its forms i.e. leaning on our own understanding, ignorance, a lack of trust in divine providence (i.e. being worried about finances) and a lack of opportunities for evangelisation. We need to be living as intentional disciples. We need to be a humble Church, and not grow lax in our need for daily conversion and to be repentant. More Eucharistic Adoration will help us see our littleness and our need for God’s grace and forgiveness, so that we can also forgive others.

To protect children and the vulnerable, to go out into the world as Jesus did ,to put more emphasis on loving Gods creation...including the environment.....to be inclusive instead of exclusive as the chute has been in the past.

I think that we are called to have more Adoration and daily Mass in churches, especially more rural churches. I believe that we are called to have more days and nights of outreach, especially to the youth. I believe with more Adoration, we would be better able to answer our call to evangelize as we would be more able to work in the Spirit. I also think that more churches should stay open, and not be closed.

To be a Church that listens, learns and responds to young people’s concerns; to be an active, inclusive and relevant Church that works to create a better world in the image of Jesus Christ. Such a Church focuses on kindness, compassion and social justice for the poor and marginalised rather than reliance on doctrine, rules and regulations. Such a Church will re-awaken the hearts of younger people and lapsed Catholics to the joys of the faith and the beauty of the Eucharist.

That the Church in Australia curb clericalism which proposes and promotes a theology of ordination as causing an irreversible change in the essence of the person which elevates an ordinary man to a sacred person and distinguishes him from other baptised members

of the faithful. As a result, the ordained can become an exalted and elitist club that protects the interests and privileges of its members and can have a focus on exercising authority and power rather than addressing pastoral needs. Our Church needs to jettison the clericalist model of Church. The price which has been paid by the clergy has been the risk of pride and arrogance and a presumption of entitlement rather than a growing humility. Clergy are seen as a cast which dominates rather than serves—that enforces rather than leads. It created two ranks of Christians. It is unrealistic to expect priests to be highly trained in business and management practice when their core purpose is to be pastoral. They need to delegate and seek the support of parishioners who have expertise in specialist areas. The time has come for the Church to be the Church of the baptised and, together with the ordained. All the People of God can create a new culture of humility, accountability and service. Our Church should not persist with structures that fail to convey the message of the gospel to the deep yearnings of men and women of today.

To be a Church in which inclusion for all is an imperative, regardless of race, creed, gender orientation, marital status, etc. If the Church wants to re-establish and maintain relevance, the barriers to inclusion must be removed. The Church should lead in responding to the needs and changes of society, so that it is seen to be acknowledging, with actions, not just words, that each person is significant and unique.

The Church needs to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate that women are a rich resource for the Church, and they need to be acknowledged in deed, not just words. The place of women in the Church must be equal to that of males. While they continue to be excluded from ordination into the priesthood, inequality, and therefore injustice remain.

That the Church in Australia can only minister effectively when we recognise our limits as individuals and are open to partnership with others. Priests must learn to minister in relationship with one another and with their community. Bishops and priests need to accept that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts differently and freely to all the baptized, including women and men, married and unmarried alike. Steps need to be taken to harness those gifts, so they are employed for the greater glorification of Jesus Christ. That the Church in Australia needs in its governance to embrace Catholic social teaching respecting the human dignity of all the faithful and act in solidarity and in accord with the principle of subsidiarity. The Church teaches Social Justice principles simultaneously with insisting on absolute authority: a contradiction. The Infallibility notion has permeated Church culture: truth on high. Church authority was based on fear. The faithful reject that model. Our Archbishop and many other bishops lack the capacity to engage and listen to the faithful. They fail us as credible teachers and spokespersons on moral issues. Their failure to engage the faithful in responding to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse is indicative. In particular, the place and status of women in our Church needs to be enhanced so they participate fully in all aspects of Church organisation and governance. The Church treats women disrespectfully and contrary to Social Justice principles. It is unacceptable that women are excluded from Church roles. All faithful must be able to participate in all aspects of Church. Our Church is called to be synodal, living and acting synodally. We need a listening and inclusive Church in which the clergy and the laity have a proper place at the table, at which the voices of the 'rusted-on' and the 'cheesed-off' Catholics are heard and at which the bishops are respectfully listening as much as speaking. The concerns of the laity need to be taken seriously and

the deliberations of the diverse faithful considered carefully regardless of their place in the hierarchy. Bishops seem blind to the fact that the faithful are the Church. A cultural change is needed so bishops and priests act synodally. Bishops and priests should be accountable to the faithful and they need to be empowered and their participation taken seriously. We do not need messianic leaders. Young people may find a synodal Church attractive. Our Church hierarchy needs to be transparent and inclusive in its governance arrangements. Bishops need to understand that the Church is not a pyramid with them at the apex. We are all baptised into Christ, so all equal. The faithful are not encouraged to take responsibility. Bishops should engage the faithful, explain their mission, listen with open minds and hearts and seriously consider the faithful's views on how the Church should function.

That the Church genuinely models inclusion, equality, acceptance and advocacy for those who do not have a voice. This includes the role of women in the Church, loving acceptance of all, the plight of the poor and underprivileged, and all those who come to Australia as refugees. It also includes justice for victims of sexual abuse by clergy, and the families of survivors and that the Church demonstrates this by following fully, the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse. Two-thirds of cases heard at the Royal Commission were perpetrated by Catholic Church clergy. There also needs to be acknowledgement and justice for those who have experienced mental anguish and physical abuse at the hands of clergy. The Church needs to model genuine humility and acknowledge the grief and pain that the whole body of the people of God have experienced as a result of the sexual abuse scandal. It has torn apart whole communities and parishes and shattered the belief and trust that the laity had in their Church. This has never been acknowledged by the clergy.

To take a long hard look at the structures of the Church that concentrate power and authority in a few men. Jesus gathered followers, both men and women, from all walks of life. He treated them with dignity and as all having equality in the eyes of God. He would have found the hierarchical structures of our Church today abhorrent, far worse than those he criticised during his lifetime.

These comments deal with the poor of Australia. The Catholic Church is very active and is to be honoured for their work towards the poor yet if we are to look around our Mass attendees, we are a middle class Church. Do we have a them and us mentality?

To become a more inclusive Church so divorcees can receive Communion and feel supported by the Church hierarchy and Community instead of feeling shamed and excluded. To end the elite, arrogant, clericalism attitude. To include and value the voice of Women and Laity. To become a relevant Church with a stronger voice on Social Justice issues such as Refugees and the Australian Governments appalling turn back the boats and cutting overseas welfare.

God is asking us to be more inclusive and welcoming.

God is asking us to reach out to the youth and young adults in our communities.

To be more open and flexible and be of the 21st Century. Jesus was born into a specific time and place in history and while the context has changed, if he were to come back now

the basics of who he was/is and how he interacted with the world would be the same. In many ways the Church has become the same, if not more restrictive, male orientated and tied up in Law, as the Jewish traditions of his time. Jesus would challenge us on a huge number of issues and practices as he did in his time on earth and especially challenge: not allowing priests to marry and have families, not allowing women to be involved in the Church at all levels of decision making and ministry including priesthood. Exploring the role of priests and could the different responsibilities currently within official priesthood be shared more widely. While we do have a focus on Social Justice and an option for the poor we need to be more proactive especially within parishes. Due to lots of reasons church communities are no longer the heart of broader communities and we need to explore how our church can be more community focused—smaller groups within parishes and outreach. It would seem that we need to focus on evangelising current congregations as well as outreaching to others. Part of this helping people to have a personal experience of God and his love in their life.
To restore the trust of the people in the clergy, by not being so secretive of past terrible things that have happened, air your dirty linen and bring it out in the open.
To completely change the male dominated hierarchy of the Church. To give decision making back to the grassroots people, particularly women. Allow married priests. Have women in all forms of ministry, including diaconate and priesthood. Do away with individual confessions. Change canon law if necessary to achieve above outcomes.
To gather as small groups in prayer to continue to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us.
Greater understanding of inclusiveness in our community
To give more personal time to all members of our Community
To find ways to engage people through social activities so that they feel like they can belong
Get back to a more traditional theology and teaching with greater emphasis on the Sacrifice of the Eucharist
More small groups to form and develop lay people in our parishes
To be a Church truly seeking forgiveness for the sins which led to the Royal Commission so that there might be a real sense of healing and peace in our community
To empower every person in their own priestly ministry within the Church so that we are not expecting our ordained priests to do all the work. We must become co-responsible for our faith development and community growth.
To understand individuals complex lives and how we can help them be responsible through small groups and faith formation
To have a new heart for a new world. The hearts of people need to be renewed so that they can hear the Word of God.
To be a sign of forgiveness and healing so that we can be a gift to the Community as we move forward

To give more emphasis to faith formation, especially the study of the Scriptures for all of us, not just the priests.
Greater role for small groups for faith sharing and faith formation.
To live forgiveness, Gods love and Mercy.
The process of dealing with sexual abuse by clergy needs to be more transparent and immediate—no more cover ups or transfers.
The Church is being called to return to the teachings of Jesus with a renewed look at some of the laws which have allowed the abuses and cover ups to occur.
To hear again the challenge given to St Francis of Assisi to Rebuild My Church.
To be open to inclusiveness. Allow the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation to be used. Encourage all Catholics to be more active as disciples in their community.
Greater effort made to re-evangelise those who have fallen away from the practice of their faith. Greater effort made to reach out to the victims of abuse as well as the ordinary parishioners who are struggling with what has happened.
For the Plenary to be an opportunity for the voices of the people to be heard and their input to valued.
To make a greater effort to involve the youth of our Church in ways that allow them to feel as if they belong as well as leading them deeper into a relationship with the Lord
For a greater voice to be given to women so that their incredible gifts might make a difference in the decision making and practices of the leaders because they are part of the leadership as well
Greater encouragement of Prayer and Meditation Groups. Allow priests to marry. More small groups. Allow the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. Greater involvement in the selection and appointment of bishops.
I believe God is asking me to identify how to reinvigorate the Church in Australia and demand change within the hierarchical structure to honestly and sincerely deal with the sexual abuse crisis —victims and perpetrators—and stop emulating Pontius Pilate washing his hands while blaming others. In the spirit of sincerely responding to Gods question for the Australian Catholic Church, I make the following points where I think changes should be seriously considered, to quote Bishop [ - ] "In the spirit of genuine synodality".  1. The Sacrament of Reconciliation—consider seriously making available regularly i.e. monthly, communal celebration (the Third Rite) with general absolution recognising that while there is the possibility for misuse of this rite that is ultimately between the penitent and God and furthermore that conclusion seems to me to ignore the efficacy of the grace

of the sacrament. "Man proposes but God disposes" (Thomas AKempis book 1 chapter 19).

2. Shepherding—The role of the bishop to guard and guide responding to the current needs of the flock actually discerning what those needs are through dialogue.

3. Leadership roles—Should be exercised positively, clearly and with encouragement.

4. The role of the laity needs to be understood in the light of the Second Vatican Council, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity.

5. In relation to evangelisation there seems to be a failure on the part of the hierarchy to recognise that this is an area where the laity is indeed very active through example both personal and particular especially in [ - ] through such avenues as Catholic education, health care, elderly care, welfare, migrants, homeless, unemployed and others.

6. Where dissent or controversy occur, the response more often than not is defensive and/or negative where, again in line with the Gospel advice, it should be clear and positive or contrite.

7. Liturgical prayer—Inappropriate language in reference to God e.g. anger, revenge, hatred. Congregation are asked to use words which seem to me to disregard what is really meant e.g. to avow that I have greatly sinned when indeed I have sinned but not greatly. It is not a trivial distinction but a very important one. The idea of prayer responses in particular which divide people into body and soul as distinct from body with soul e.g. "The Lord be with you" reply "And with your spirit". To me, this opens the door to the notion that the soul can blame the body for unacceptable behaviour.

8. The age for acceptance into the seminary for training for the priesthood should/must be raised to at least 35 years as one of the conditions. In the current matter of Cardinal Pell I believe that he most certainly is guilty of bringing the Catholic Church in Australia into grave disrepute. Respectfully, [ - ].

The laity are being asked to step up their contributions to Church activity, especially women. We are being asked to challenge our Church hierarchy to be beacons of joy and freedom and to abandon their self-righteous proclaiming of what should be the moral order as most have no inkling of the murkiness of daily life for the great majority of laity. The Church needs to acknowledge and accept that generally our bishops have failed to engage and harness the resource that the laity are in proclaiming the Word. They are poor managers of people and resources. Their lack of humility is a barrier to the mission that has been entrusted to them. Few of them have the common touch. Few have the ability to engage the laity in the mission of the Church. The process of leader selection is from the top down and takes no account of the particular needs of the community to be served. Our communities need regular opportunities to confer to discuss and consider the needs of the faithful and the broader community and put in place ways of addressing those needs. Those processes need to be transparent and accountable so there is proper oversight of strategies and how they are being implemented. Responses to needs and wants should be timely rather than protracted. Governance arrangements need to accord to best practice rather than tradition. Our Church is not the holder of all wisdom and needs to engage with the modern world both for the purpose of leavening that world as well as learning from that dialogue how best the Church might act. Most of our clergy have little or



no understanding of Catholic Social Teaching especially the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and the common good. How do they square the notion of human dignity with the narrow role women are given in our Church?
To be faithful to the 2000 years of teaching of the Church.
God is asking so many things of us at this time. He is asking us to come home to him and find His son in adoration. We need more people finding time to go to adoration and pray. We need to get more young people to be involved in the Church through re-establishing youth and children's ministry and especially in regional Australia.
Our parish has gathered together to reflect upon our response to the call of the Plenary Council 2020. The following is our submission that was captured during our gathering together as a community and discernment over a number of months. We have broken our submission into seven sections (Faith Education, Church Structure, Clergy, Sacraments, Marginalised, Laity and Women and Young People), which reflected our discernment.
To be open and frank with our believers and non-believers alike. To carefully and diligently explain what we do and why we do it. To also explain how communal prayer and worship are essential elements of the Catholic Christian life, giving rise to the kindness of heart and the good works done, being done and to be done into the future. To make our people a welcoming body and our buildings a happy place for people to come rather than the scary, highly regulated institutions so many "out there" as well as many baptised Catholics think we are. We need to be known for integrity, honesty, fairness, probity and cheerfulness which arise from our relationship with the Lord.
The official Bible (Vulgate) to be used in all prayer books, readings and quotes so as to avoid misunderstandings among the faithful. No inclusive language anywhere...man is a generic word and covers all humans. Needs to be explained...people don't know and the English becomes awkward. Confession should be available more consistently e.g. after or before every Mass especially on weekends. Our Lady has asked for the rosary to be said. (Lourdes, Fatima etc.) Should we not listen to her advice? The prayer to St. Michael which was said at the end of each Mass was dropped years ago. Why? We need it now more than ever.
The members of the [ - ] College Plenary Council forum have written the attached statement which has been approved by all secondary students of our College and our College Principal, [ - ]. Our College was established as a parish school in [ - ] in 1888 and then the Sisters of St Joseph assumed governance in 1908 until 2010. We still have a strong link to the charism of the Sisters and believe that our statement has been informed by our strong tradition from which we draw strength and wisdom. The document is attached in the hope that you will deeply consider its contents.
To listen to the voices of all. Young, old, man, woman, clergy or non-clergy, victim or perpetrator (of any type of crime, but particularly those that occur from within the Catholic Church. If avoiding such situations means that priests must disclose what they hear in confession then so be it! Protecting the perpetrator is one thing but what about the victim? Make Masses more youth/young adult friendly, i.e. sing modern hymns, involve youth in

Masses. Do away with repetitious long Masses. As much as possible make the sermon a bit interactive.

What is God asking of us in Australia at this time? Summary: To make his Church a suitable vehicle to carry his message with credibility to Australians. God is asking us to have a Church whose people and leaders understand what harm has been done to many Australians by his Church. Leaders ostensibly devoted to promoting love, inclusiveness and Jesus' way have deformed the lives of many of the Church's priests. Removing them for a normal life within their own community has led to lives unduly influenced by pride and a perverse sexuality. This in turn has resulted in significant suffering in the lives of children and young Australians. Where Christ asked that the lambs be gently led there has been rape and sexual abuse. This heinous betrayal has resulted in misery and suicide among victims. This betrayal also means that my daughters who received the sacraments and attended Catholic schools see contact with the Church as a hazard to the psychological and moral well-being of their children. To me God is asking us in Australia not to have a Church that is seen as such a destructive organisation and pariah that its members' grandchildren are discouraged from contact with it by rightly outraged parents. A Church that would avoid these errors would be organised differently.

1. A change from the current princely and bureaucratic government model which prevails in all dioceses would be an improvement.
2. The leaders of the Church need to be drawn from a wider pool than the current ordained celibate male group.
3. Clergy manning parishes and church agencies should be married and be either male or female.
4. Laity in parishes should have a role in appointing their sacramental provider. The suggestions above could reduce the current (apparently) desired distance between the people and ordained leaders. It might also reduce the mystification of leadership and the clergy's role that has led to that clergy's lack of accountability to the law. The clergy has been given great status. They have been seen as far beyond those they think they lead, and have become immune to pressure from community standards. The resultant egotism and arrogance of many clergy means they are not under any pressure to follow acceptable moral standards or even Church law. They do not have to treat with any parishioners as equals. The notion that the Catholic people are served by their clergy is in many cases a hollow claim and in some a hypocritical and clearly false one. These circumstances, along with the implementation of the celibate ideal have led to sexual abuse and general disenchantment with the Church and its message.

**ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD:** Intelligent people will not be browbeaten into silent submission to a dictate by any authority, even a pope. God has given each of us an intellect and expects all of us to use this intellect. A banning of the conversation around the ordination of women is insulting to all of us. It is also abusive. It is patronising clericalism and an abuse of power. The inclusion of women among the ordained needs to be in the conversation of possibilities in the Catholic Church, and not just the conversation, but the vision. The vast majority of people are not just asking for this, they are demanding it. The lack of female participation in the highest levels of Church



governance is a contributor to the corruption in the Church. Women must be included at every level of power in the Church. Failure to engage in this conversation will be a failure of trust that the Holy Spirit of Truth will lead us. We have nothing to fear from being open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit may speak to us in a way that is new. In a post-Royal Commission Church, we do not have the option of ignoring this possibility of women's engagement or of silencing the conversation. Failure to seriously consider the ordination of women will render the hierarchy irrelevant in an increasing number of people's eyes. Until the recent eras, the root cause of women being subordinated to men has been because of men's physical superiority. The present and future will be shaped by wisdom, not physical dominance. Already, women lead political parties, governments, judicial appointments, police forces, defence ministries, corporations and hierarchies in other religious communions. Let us listen. Then let our Australian Church present the case forcefully and persistently to the Vatican, refusing to be silenced.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** Environmental protection. This planet, Earth, is God's creation, a part of creation which took 13.7 billion years to evolve to its present form. Inherent to its present form is every creature on the planet, each of which is also a product of 13.7 billion years of evolution, and each of which is unrepeatable. Every creature on the planet is now at risk of another mass-extinction. The human capacity for industrial development is singularly responsible for the catastrophe that scientists are now warning us about. Global warming, oceanic acidification and environmental destruction needs to be in the forefront of the Church's concerns, and the Church needs to be at the forefront of climate action and environmental protection, and needs to be seen to be so. Population Growth. A related element to this environmental destruction is the dramatic incline of human population growth. As population grows, industrialisation grows. Along with this industrialisation comes increased mining, agribusiness with its land-clearing, habitat destruction and species extinction. And there is an unsustainable increase in the size of the global fishing industry. The planet is reaching human saturation. Further growth in global population puts further strain on the entire global ecosystem. Thus, global population needs to plateau. Now, as the human intellect and human ingenuity has driven this industrialisation with its related growth in human population, the human intellect and human ingenuity should, therefore, be employed to limit further population growth. The Church should accept the use of artificial contraception as a necessity, given these signs of the times. The Church should recognise that the ban on artificial contraception has never been widely accepted by the general populace of Catholics who have simply ignored the ruling. This position needs to be presented to the Vatican by the Australian bishops.

**ECCLESIAL POWER:** The Australian Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has helped to shine a light on the Catholic Church's system of governance and its inadequacies. The clericalist structures have been shown to be prone to corruption. Left to itself, the Church would not have engaged in any thorough examination or reform of itself. It took the institutions of State to bring the Church leadership to account. What this indicates is that there is an urgent need to reform the structures of power in the Church so that lay people, and especially women, share real power at every level of governance, especially at the top levels, that there be a more

democratic input into Church governance. The system of absolute power of bishops is unsatisfactory in an advanced age where in the wider world among the advanced nations, power is vested in various levels of society. Since the conviction of Cardinal George Pell in December and the lifting of the media ban on Tuesday last, legal commentators have advocated that the Church needs an independent office like the Attorney General's office. The Church needs an instituted system of checks and balances on power. Presently, the Church is structured in a mediaeval monarchical system. Bishops are still referred to as "Princes" of the Church. The power structures have unaccountability structured into them, all power being at the top of this monarchical system. Checks and balances on this power come from outside the Church only when criminality is suspected or established, as evinced by the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. However, non-criminal abuse can be, and is exercised in the Church. A more democratic structuring of the Church needs to be established with checks and balances which resemble the best institutions of the secular democracies. The mediaeval practices such as the kissing of the Bishop's Ring, mediaeval trappings such as the Cappa Magna and other such ostentation, mediaeval titles such as Your Eminence, Your Grace, My Lord, and even the title of the Bishop's Palace all need to be discontinued and relegated to the pages of history. The people need to be recognised as brothers and sisters among a pilgrim people who are baptised in Christ and gifted with the Holy Spirit, and not treated as subjects who are expected to be docile.

God is asking us the same thing that Jesus asked of us: to love and obey him; to follow the commandments; to be baptised, receive the Eucharist with reverence and love; and to draw from the strength of the sacraments. If we truly want to know what God is asking of us, we should read the gospels and ponder on them and pray. Our huge Catholic schools are not really Catholic. Many of the teachers are not Catholic, they are good people, but they are not able to nourish or pass on the faith. We need to make our schools Catholic again; to teach our children our Catholic faith. If the faith is to be passed on it must be lived. Prayer should pass through the school life the air we breathe. I can't stress enough that we need Catholics who practice their faith to teach the children. Even if it were a team that came to the school and taught the faith it would help. One very important point in the teaching of Religious Education in Catholics Schools: The children study alternative religions as early as grade 8 and they manage to pick and choose what they think suits them. This is before they know their own faith. They need to learn the Catholic faith first. It would be wonderful to see more priests in the diocese visiting families, getting involved with call for charity and generally being good shepherds.

Renewal of parishes with an emphasis on evangelising our parishioners, forming them for authentic discipleship and to be missionaries so they can bring the gospel of Christ to other people. We need to reassess our Church life structures in parishes, schools and dioceses to ensure they facilitate the forming of missionary disciples and that all the works of the Church are on a missionary footing. We need to establish catechetical institutes to form Christian disciples, and to form catechists who can mentor other Catholics and effectively transmit the Catholic faith in all its fullness. We need our Catholic schools to regain their Catholic identity and mission. We need our clergy to have formation in homiletics. We need the vocation of the laity to be promoted and embraced by lay

Catholics. We need lay formation of people working in the professions like law, medicine, politics, education, economics, etc. We need to excise clericalism from our Church.

To spread the joy of the Gospel and evangelise our fellow Australians.

I wish to remain a part of the Catholic Church which matches its teaching with its practices. We are regularly encouraged to "love our neighbour as ourselves" yet those in charge of the Church and many Catholic institutions do not match this exhortation to its practices. By this I mean that too often in the Church we see favouritism in employment and other practices which are anything but fair. We also see employees cut adrift in practices which are of questionable legality but definitely not in accord with the Catholic faith. The Church has a wonderful theology which I am not seeking to change but simply to ask that our religious leaders demonstrably practice the tenet of our faith by loving their neighbours as themselves. We see a Church which by its attitudes is moving further away from Vatican II towards a more authoritarian and less welcoming Church. Again I am not asking for a walking away from the basic tenets of our faith but to deliver and implement them in a consistent and loving way. Christ told the woman at the well to "go and sin no more". I take this as a requirement to condemn the sin but embrace the sinner. Our Church does not do this enough. I have seen too many times our clergy use the authority of their position to seek temporal outcomes not through reasoned argument but by a claim to the authority of their position. Many senior clergy might say that they don't get push back from the laity but when there is no ability to change the decision the laity choice is to remain silent and continue with their faith or leave. Many have chosen the latter option. One of the Pope's titles is "the servant of the servants of God". I see precious little of this in the local church. There are some good priests who live this out but too many who seem to like the trappings of office and the higher they progress the fewer there appear to be. Over too many years, I have witnessed priests who have not appeared to fully live their priestly vows while exhorting the faithful to be faithful. I have also witnessed too many priests who are not prepared to challenge their fellow priests when they see what the rest of us see. If the priests are unwilling to challenge their fellow priests on such matters why would the faithful? The modern Australian Catholic Church needs to organise itself along modern lines to use the skills of many well qualified and faithful parishioners to ensure proper accountabilities are instituted. I find the wording of the current Mass liturgy to be turgid. Arcane language that deflates rather than elevates is the order of the day. There is so much uplifting language in the Bible and liturgical music which could be used to make the Mass an uplifting occasion. The current language is not that and the language appears to be deliberately exclusive rather than inclusive.

Move towards a more traditional liturgy (music especially). Bring back no meat as a Friday penance to strengthen community. Bring back the St Michael Prayer at the end of Mass for the Church. Better religious instruction in our Catholic schools.

After much prayer, reflection and discussion our group answered the question in the following way: God is asking us to be respectful.

I truly believe that at this time, God is asking us to build up his Church within Australia, especially in light of recent events. I get a strong sense that we are called to provide stronger catechesis to all Catholics, particularly facilitating catechesis for the young, but also for all ages and levels: there seems to be a large quantity of people aged 20-45 who

have not received proper catechesis, by which I mean not solely rote learning the teachings, nor completing a colouring in picture or learning the teacher's interpretation of the Church's teaching but strong education, in the modern style (facilitating discussion while ensuring the truth is not altered) and at a level that individuals can understand: from basic, introductory simple teachings to complex theology for those who wish to access this, for free or very inexpensively. I also believe that God is calling for more openness and dialogue between the hierarchy of the church and the average, everyday Catholic, and specifically for the youth. I do believe God is calling all Catholics to arm themselves with courage and to speak the real truth of the Church, in all areas. There is splintering within the clergy on issues such as same-sex marriage, and I believe God is asking us to ensure that a united front is presented, speaking the truth of the Church—that marriage is between a man and a woman. It is vital that, however, this is done in a sensitive and respectful manner, inviting dialogue and understanding of the Church's stance, rather than (as occurs in some individuals) a platform for spouting hatred and bigotry.

I believe the searing experience of last week for the Catholic Church in Australia indicates that the Holy Spirit wishes us to renounce clericalism and no longer impose celibacy on all priests. There is no reason that celibacy should be mandatory. How many priests have we lost because of tying two gifts together—the call to priesthood and the call to celibacy. It is not mandatory in the Eastern rite, or for newly ordained ex-Anglican priests. The ontological change in a priest in ordination must only refer to the priest administering the sacraments and saying Mass, not when he is at the races or having a shower & so on. He also represents the people as well as Our Lord when he says Mass. The Lord wants us to embrace additional, new forms of spirituality.

For each individual Catholic to accept personal responsibility for their faith formation and for being informed about their faith, by utilising talks, lectures and other opportunities that are offered, and by reading. To have their understanding of the world and their response to it based on Scripture, tradition and teaching not on the outpourings of the secular media in their variety of forms. For all Catholics to come to know Jesus of Nazareth more deeply and the follow Him more closely because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. For Catholic lay people not to talk about the Church as though they are not members, for example, they should do this instead of we should do this. Not to complain about limitations on participation of lay people in the life of the Church when appeals for ministries to be supported are ignored.

I believe the crisis in our Church is because of the lack of prayer and hence a lack of a personal relationship with God and without this encounter (conversion) we can only love in our own strength—but God wants a relationship with us in order to bring his love to the world. It is only in His love that we can evangelise. One of the bishops in Birmingham in the UK did research in all the parishes of his diocese and found that parishes with public Adoration produced vocations—Adoration and prayer is soooooo needed in our time, particularly in the parishes where faith is dwindling—it is only in sitting with Jesus and spending time with Him that we discover His great love for us. God who made Himself available in the Blessed Sacrament to be with us always, is not loved as He should be and we wonder why the Church is in trouble—If He who annihilated Himself in order to make Himself present is not honoured, then it is no wonder that the Church is having difficulties.

1) If we are serious about being a more inclusive Church, move away from the notion that the Eucharist is a reward for the righteous towards the lived reality that it is a remedy for the ailing. What that looks like is to offer the Eucharist to anyone who prays with us in an earnest and open manner, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation etc. If they turn up and pray with the community, then they are just as much “worthy” members of the community as anyone else. None of us is perfect, none of us is truly worthy of the gift of the Eucharist, yet those who come before God with openness to and need for the strength and peace that comes from the Lord in the Eucharist, ought not be denied the greatest gift that humanity could imagine.

2) This suggestion threatens the very power base of the Church hierarchy to decide who is in and who is out. A person living a life which is less than the Christian ideal of love is called to change aspects of their lifestyle, but the greatest agent of change in the Christian worldview is love, so allow every person to experience the gift of the Lord’s love in the Eucharist and trust that the Holy Spirit and the wisdom and love of the community will enfold that person in their brokenness and struggle and enable them to change and grow. Excluding those who are lost and broken and expecting them to conform to our ideals is arrogant and un-Christ-like.

3) Move away from the policy of importing priests who struggle to connect with the local community in truly meaningful ways. This policy has not worked and has prevented new models of ministry from coming into being: be that married diaconate, married priests, female priests, lay-led assemblies, non-sacramental prayer services, scripture study and prayer to augment the celebration of Eucharist as we currently experience it.

4) Establish structures in every parish and every diocese that ensure meaningful accountability of priests and bishops. Like every other professional role in society, there needs to be a mechanism for complaints and unprofessional practices to be challenged. This does not need to be a means by which priests and bishops are answerable for every unpopular decision they make, but some reasonable system where a priest or bishop can be called to account after some number or series of significant complaints.

5) The Australian people are not stupid and are hopeful yet somewhat cynical about the value of this entire exercise. I suggest that in the wake of the Royal Commission their radar is tuned in and if words and platitudes are all that come from this process rather than real and meaningful change, then we will struggle to recover any credibility in this country for many generations to come.

To become more faithful in following the teachings of the Church. Especially through proper formation. Not through watering down or ignoring the harder teachings, like mandatory Sunday Mass attendance, encouragement of Holy Hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament, frequent confession, chastity, contraception, abortion, euthanasia and same sex marriage and homosexual practices. These are the first things that come to mind that I almost never hear spoken about in homilies. We are paying a big price for this neglect in the dearth of truly faithful Catholic families and priestly vocations. It also is a great concern that many souls may be lost because of this neglect.

An absolute necessity for Archbishops and priests to consult with the laity. Shouldn’t be seen as a concession or a courtesy. They need to listen to them otherwise there will be no



"real down to earth" Catholics in the pews on Sunday, only pre Vatican II Catholics. Seminarians need to mix with males and females during their time in the Seminary so that they can learn to relate better with ordinary people. They often have a sense of entitlement and think they are better than the general congregation. Without watering down the tenets of the Catholic Church we must find a way to embrace divorced persons and enable them to receive the Sacraments and not be so black and white. The "Old Boys Club" mentality of the Church hierarchy needs to change. Women must be a part of the Church hierarchy if it is to survive. In [ - ] our Archbishop due to his pre Vatican II thinking is driving people away from the Church rather than encouraging them to stay.

I think God is asking us to be shining examples of His loving teachings in our troubled world. Sadly, the image of the Catholic Church (and other faiths too) has been severely damaged by revelations of child sexual abuse. Pope Francis is reaching out across the world with messages of openness and warmth. We who live in beautiful Australia need to follow his example and not shut ourselves in bigotry and complacency. We need to befriend those of other faiths and accept that God belongs to everyone. God is asking us to:

- 1) Seriously reflect on the structures of the Church hierarchy.
- 2) Have many more women involved in decision-making, especially married women with children.
- 3) Accept the sexuality of those who are attracted to their own gender.
- 4) Make celibacy a choice for priests and religious.
- 5) Encourage women to the priesthood.
- 6) Within marriage, birth control be allowed where necessary, .e.g. illness etc. I am an 88 and a half year old Catholic woman with six children and a non-Catholic husband.

I think that God is asking Australians to remain faithful and not despair during a very trying time for the Catholic Church in our country. Also, that although changes need to be made to ensure sexual predators and those who cover-up for them are exposed and charged, Catholic doctrine isnt to blame and isnt in need of changing. We were let down by those fallible humans we trusted most to follow it and lead us.

I think we as a Church have a real need to respond to, support, and nurture young families. The family is the building block of society; and in this time we see the family put under so many pressures and strains, often causing it to fall apart. Within the Catholic Church, we have a beautiful theology of the family, and a joyful understanding of children as a gift. The ultimate role of the parent is to love their children and nurture their faith to realise Gods eternal love for them. I feel that parents and families are not supported by the Church in this challenging task. Family friendly opportunities for faith formation and practical support are needed to aid parents mission to nurture their childrens faith. There are so many elements that need addressing in order to make this possible. We need to think about our churches and gathering places in terms of family -friendly buildings —do they have practical needs such as change tables, kitchens, play spaces for children, are they safe for children? How can we provide faith formation experiences for families that enable both parents and children to engage and deepen their faith in age appropriate, and

family-appropriate ways (that fit in with family schedules). How can we practically support families so that they can remain engaged and continue to support their local church communities? (For example, meal rosters for families with a new baby, a sick child, a parent away, etc.) How can we reach out to the local community around us to support families (for example, running playgroups in church buildings). How can we foster a real community that really knows each other and supports each other, and welcomes and supports new people.

I think God is asking us to not be afraid to radically live the gospel; the means of this is attained solely through a prayer life. In times such as these, where it is quite unpopular to be Christian, and especially a Catholic, I feel God wants us more than ever to be counter-cultural and witness to His truth, which is love—to love even when it hurts. Sometimes it's scary to be a practising Catholic in Australia because this means living a life at times directly contrary to that of everyone else. It means going against the tide and for this we need grace, which comes through a real relationship with Him—through prayer. Thus, I believe God is asking each of us to return to Him in prayer—it is here that we receive the strength and grace needed to be Christian in a world that hates us. I think God is asking us to spend time with Him every day, in His physical presence in the Blessed Sacrament where He is waiting to give us the graces we need. Then we can be sent out and bring His love to all the broken Australians out there who have never encountered this real love. This means Churches need to be open more frequently and times of prayer such as Eucharistic Adoration to be available to the faithful.

As I was praying about this question, I was getting the sense of the words, “come to me, come back to me.” I think that God is calling us to that deep and personal relationship with Him because without this, it is impossible to live the gospel—to love God and to love our neighbour as Christ has loved us. This relationship with Christ is fostered through prayer—the Sacraments, Adoration, devotions (i.e. Rosary, Divine Mercy etc.), charismatic prayer (intercessory prayer, praise and worship). The second thing that came to mind (which connects to the first point) is that I think that God is calling us to live a life in the Spirit—to constantly live our daily lives seeking and being attentive to what the Spirit is asking of us, just like Our blessed Mother and the saints. We have so many programs and ideas of how to build God's kingdom that often we end up building our own kingdom because we have failed to take things to prayer and let the Holy Spirit lead. Also, I think that God, like always, is asking us not to be afraid to be saints—to be radical. As a Church we need to be serious about this. There needs to be that intentional desire to be a disciple. This is especially required of those who are working in the Church, i.e. bishops, priests, principals and teachers in Catholic schools, lay people who have leadership roles in diocese, parishes etc. As St. Catherine of Siena says, “If we are what we should be, we will set the world on fire”. Thus as a Church, we need to be lovingly firm about our standards with those who are in high positions and teaching positions—that is, unless one has a sincere desire to love Christ and His Church, and walk in holiness, then they cannot assume such grave responsibility. We have to be courageous about this. Lastly, I think that we ought to be more aware and live in the supernatural. Sometimes I think that the Australian Church lives only in the ‘natural.’ For example, I have and still am experiencing at the moment the lack of availability of the sacraments. Daily Mass, regular confession and adoration are



somehow so difficult to access or to start up in the parish solely because there is either little or no congregation. And churches are closed down or sold because there is a decline in the congregation. This is a sign of living only in the natural. Wherever Mass is celebrated and adoration is exposed, graces flow out of the church and to the town. St. Jean Vianney had supernatural eyes and lived in this reality and thus the town of Ars converted. This links then to living a life in the Spirit.

God is asking us to bring prayer back into the world through Eucharistic Adoration, Daily Mass and the Rosary. The faith here in Australia is in difficulty because its members—the Body of the Church—struggle to have a prayer life or do not have one at all. Prayer keeps us connected to God and helps us to be in relationship with Him. So if we don't pray, it's easy to treat the faith as something like a "category" of your life say like a sports club, school life, work life. This happened to me when I moved to Australia when I was ten years old. I loved God and I knew he existed and the faith was definitely what was very important to me and then family. But it wasn't the centre or the meaning of my existence. But this was because I didn't see that God had to be "all in all." I prayed, and I knew how to pray certain prayers but I didn't have a prayer LIFE. So my connection with God was just like a mobile phone where I could switch on and off. This caused me great instability in my faith, and also my relationship with God. My love for God was reignited, kept alive and nurtured through Eucharistic Adoration, the Mass, the Rosary and regular Confession. The first time it was reignited was in an Immaculata Mission School at [ - ]. During this retreat they had Eucharistic Adoration virtually available all the time. There I felt God say: "I know you." God became so real to me and I began to understand that He was so close to me, that He loves me more than anybody else in the world—even more than I love myself—and that He is rooting for me to be with Him in heaven. Going home from that retreat in January was followed by the struggle of sustaining the prayer. By the grace of God and through the community around me—I was supported. But I mention this because one of the things that was difficult was that the parishes nearby didn't have Eucharistic Adoration and this was so hard. I went to a secular high school and was surrounded by so many things that were anti the faith and pulling me away from my spiritual life, what I really needed was the comfort of a Mother close by who I could run to each day or week and be consoled, strengthened and nurtured by giving me Jesus through Adoration and accessible Masses. Parishes need to offer Eucharistic Adoration and devotions like the Rosary and keep their Churches open to encourage people to have a prayer life. We are also called to live charity. Love is what will change the world and also help people believe that it is the only thing that matters and is the only thing that we will bring with us to heaven. Those who are up in high positions in the Church need to be a witness of love and prayer so that the sheep can follow, and then the world can see. Prayer will help us be loving and humble as a Church. To be a humble Church is to be a praying Church. Humility can only come before Eucharist because you encounter the truth of yourself and need for God's healing love.

God is asking us to go back to our traditional roots and not continue down the path of modernism and progressive extremism. We need to stop trying to change things within the Church unless it means reverting to how it once was before all of the problems arose after Vatican II. We need to stick with priests being celibate as it is a traditional going way back and not be forced to drive us further towards Protestantism with priests marrying, not only

will there be financial burdens but more importantly they dont have the time to have a family and also serve God in the tight schedule and hard work load that they are given. If we are wondering why vocations arent happening, look to why there are many in the traditionalist Catholic churches that celebrate Latin Mass and why the Novus Ordo ones are struggling. We must not allow divorcees to receive Communion no matter what progressives in the Church say as it is a direct undermining of our faith. We must not bow to political correctness and accept the LGBT agenda as it is a mocking of our faith. We need to be more political and get the Church to once again have influence on society and become more powerful in the decision making. We need to ensure Catholic Schools are teaching the faith just like they used to rather than pushing these matters aside and becoming no better than Public Schools. We need to ensure that every diocese in this country has a Latin Mass available as it promotes the traditional core of the faith and every parishioner should have that option to attend such a Mass, at the moment there are 3 dioceses that dont have it available, [ - ] being one of them and for one of the biggest cities in the country to not have one is a disgrace. We must go back to traditional hymns rather than turn into a charismatic Hillsong style church, there is already those types of churches available and whilst some may think they are thriving they are not, because people come and go and dont stay on full term, it also undermines our faith in trying to be like them although we arent. As a young person I reject guitars and all forms of modern worship and much prefer Gregorian chanting and traditional hymns. Church numbers started to decline when the modern reforms of Vatican II came about and it hasnt recovered since. If you are wondering why our numbers are down and vocations are down, that is the one event plus the further modernisation over time that has made people lose the faith. We must be strong and adhere to all forms of tradition whether it is regarding liturgy, social views, etc. I also believe that the modern architecture of the newer churches are a disgrace and look no different to modern Pentecostal halls. Also we need to get rid of gay priests as they have been the ones that have brought about the molestation issues. Sacred silence in Mass and modesty should be enforced also. Bring back headscarfs and no female speakers, or altar servers. We need to start living our faith.

God is asking His Church to pray. The Church exists to evangelise, however the Holy Spirit is the principle agent for evangelisation, therefore, it can only bear fruit through prayer. Specifically, God is asking His Church to teach and encourage young people to pray. Firstly, this is such a powerful witness to the older generations in the Church. Secondly, prayer affirms the place of young people in the Church. Young people today are leaving the Church because they feel they have no place.

I think God has given us the ultimate challenge right now. Where to from here? We have a broken Church. Can it be fixed and do we want to fix it? Is it just the Church or is it part of a wider breakdown, a reckless race to secularism, to materialism, to individualism? Do we want to be better people or not? What kind of world do we want to live in and how much are we prepared to do to make it a world to be proud of? Are we ready to break out of our cocoons and truly look around us and see what needs to be done or do we want it all done for us? Are we really ready to make Australia inclusive? And he seeks courage and honesty in response—courage in stepping forward and not being afraid to openly proclaim our faith in the face of challenges both within the Church and outside but also to question,

challenge and change. And honesty in the sense of true humility in the face of failings but also the honesty to really look at ourselves. With the conviction of Cardinal George Pell and the ever-declining numbers in congregation and Mass attendances, we are standing at a crossroads. What choices are we going to make? Are we prepared to stand up as parishes, as communities, to make a difference? Are we ready to take on the challenge of making Catholicism relevant to everyone not just captive audiences? Are we ready to have the courage to stand up for our beliefs but also to know, really know, what it is we really believe in? In my opinion, we need to go back to the very basics. Jesus didn't indulge in canon laws or rigid rules; he believed in basic tenets. If he were alive today, he might just torch the Vatican and flush out all the rats. Then he would pick up the charred stones and start re-building. He would look around and ask who is going to help me?

To bring the Word, embodied in Jesus, to people where they are at. This can take a number of practical forms for different people within the Catholic community. I appreciated having a priest who, from time to time, introduced and concluded a homily and in between, had a trusted, able and experienced parishioner (male, female and of various ages) share how the Word was at work in their life. This made the Word accessible, dynamic and real in different ways and also highlighted the priest's role as one of building up capable, missionary disciples. Another practical means of bringing the Word to the people is by supporting families to engage in parish life, service and faith formation opportunities. Having safe, practical spaces in or adjacent to churches that allow children to play while parents enjoy fellowship with the community. Organising rosters of meal preparation for families or mothers who are expecting or have welcomed a newborn, families with sick children and families where one parent is temporarily away. Rostering people in parishes to help mind children during Mass so that parents can engage in ministries for the community such as acolyte-ing, music ministry, youth ministry, sharing in the homily (as mentioned above) or running children's liturgies. Providing young adult and family focused catechises that makes provision for the care of children so that parents can engage with the catechesis. To practically bring the Word to the young people they need to be hearing the Word from fellow young people. Working as a youth minister in Catholic schools I have seen students respond to the Word shared with them from a younger person with much more openness and engagement than the same word shared with them by an older parish priest. To promote a culture of intentional mission within our communities. Practical steps for building missional Catholics are evident in programs such as Divine Renovation. Adopting proactive missional stances such as this in Catholic communities is essential for the life and mission of the church. A non-missional church is a dead church. We don't "light a candle, and hide it under a bushel". Similarly, opportunities need to be created for same-sex attracted, divorcees and other sinners (like us) to be able to belong to a Catholic community before being told how to behave. Again the Divine Renovation framework outlines a practical method for welcoming people; giving them a sense of belonging, leading to a sharing of belief with the community which creates place of trust and love within which too confront sin. Matthew 8:15 says that if a brother sins, go and confront him and if that doesn't work try again with the help of others. The brotherhood precedes the confrontation of sin. Similarly in John 4 Jesus first demonstrated intimate knowledge of the Samaritan woman at the well before she came to believe in him and his message and that intimacy was the catalyst for many in her town also coming to believe.

To address priest shortage in a way that makes Mass and sacraments readily available to all Catholics everywhere. One way this can be done is to establish a level of priesthood wherein faith filled, suitably selected individuals, single or married, who have proven their commitment to Church and parish can be elected by their parish community to undertake basic training and education and then have them ordained so that they have the power of consecration. A more academic priestly education and training can be available for those who want to follow a traditional priestly life and this role could have more of a teaching/preaching role. The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be available to all in its completeness via the third rite, leaving the first rite to those who want it and maybe limiting administration of the first rite to the more highly trained priest who has greater insight into psychology. Priesthood should be open to women as well as men but given this is probably too big a hurdle for our conservative Church to cope with at this time, at least let the priests marry.

To decide whether divorced people can re-marry in the Catholic church or not and do away with the invasive, soul-destroying process of Annulment to allow re-marriage unless the parties really want an annulment. In many cases the annulment is nothing more than a Catholic Divorce, the grounds for which (immaturity etc.) could be found in hosts of marriages that people have been able to make work. It is a joke when annulment is granted on grounds as above and soul destroying for people who are at no fault in a divorce, cant justify or cant bear to go through the annulment process and dig up old hurts and then re-marry and spend the rest of their lives cut off from the Eucharist.

To get over our possessive attitude to the Eucharist and be open to sharing it with those who are not Catholic if they wish to receive when they attend Catholic Mass. The sacrament of Christs body should unify, not divide. This applies to homosexual people as well. They are Gods creation and should be welcome at His table.

To think more mystically about the presence of Jesus in Holy Communion and move on from the concept of Body and Blood in the literal sense as it is still preached from the pulpit. A deeper, wider reflection on the presence of the risen Christ in a mystical encounter is more likely to appeal to the doubters than the constant insistence on what is simply unbelievable to many people that we have a true physical presence which we simply dont. Those discerning such plenary suggestions as this would do well to read some modern theologians like Kevin Treston for one and there are many others who can think more broadly than we can get in Sunday sermons.

To do away with First rite of Reconciliation for children. It is the beginning of the guilt burden that many Catholics carry for the rest of their lives. Even though the preparation these days is much gentler than in several generations ago, there is still the negative connotation of sin of which I maintain, children are not capable. They might be naughty in the adults eyes but to convert normal childhood behaviours to sin requiring the forgiveness of a foreboding priest (even if he is as gentle as humanly possible) is just another form of child abuse (psychological) imposed by the Church on innocent children. There is no reason that they cannot receive Holy Communion if they have not gone through the ordeal of the Sacrament of Reconciliation—after all Jesus said, "Let the little

children come to me"—He did not add, "but only if they have confessed their imaginary sins first".

I believe that God is asking the Church in Australia to return to fundamentals—prayer and holiness—this is what allowed the early Church to thrive—even amidst terrible persecution. At Pentecost they had been waiting on the “promise of the Father” the Holy Spirit, waiting in prayer with Mary, and in a disposition of receptivity they were transformed themselves and went out in power. Peter, who had denied Christ out of fear, boldly proclaimed him despite persecution. I believe God wants a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Australia and the world—that His children may really live in the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to be able to fulfil Christ’s command to “love one another as I have loved you” as it is by this that all people will know we are his disciples. All other renewal and reforms can only take place through prayer and holiness. He is the Vine, and without Him we can do nothing. I believe God wants to give a special place to Eucharistic Adoration—that he wants to transform lives, and bless people with his presence. I think Eucharistic Adoration is essential to this renewal as it puts Jesus Christ at the centre. I have personally witnessed many transformations come about through Eucharistic Adoration, people of all ages, but especially youth being transformed, healed and led into a deeper practice of faith. I believe God is asking the Church in Australia to trust. Trust in Him and radically live and proclaim the Gospel.

I believe that the Plenary Council will fail unless our bishops commit to a process that requires all bishops to consult in a meaningful way with the laity. Bishops should be accountable to the people they serve. One way this could happen is for each Bishop to hold twice yearly meetings in each deanery in their diocese for the purpose of informing the laity of their vision for the diocese and listening to, and responding to, our concerns in a genuine way. Our views should be then taken to meetings of Australian bishops whether our bishop agrees with us or not. Expanded Parish Councils or bishop/priest meetings will not achieve this purpose and, in my opinion, will only indicate that our bishops lack the courage or will to open themselves up to the Holy Spirit working in the people they serve. For a proper relationship between bishops and laity there has to be total transparency. Details of meetings should be readily available to all Catholics.

God is asking of the Church to radically change with relation to women being included in the administration of the Church. Women comprise over 50% of our congregation yet are poorly represented in decision making. Females come with a different perspective to problems and are more in touch with the dynamics of family and church life. This is something that the Church badly needs and will represent a bold move away from a male dominated organisation which has a fairly limited appreciation of family dynamics and church attendance. The other glaring problem is celibacy. This does not mean for the Church to insist on Priests to be married but allow those clerics who want to marry to do so and remain as active priests in the Church. We have over the years lost some very caring and dedicated priests who just want to have a normal life. The removal of a sense of entitlement in our senior clergy would also be an improvement to their standing in the eyes of the general public and the faithful congregation.

By looking at Matthew 23:28 (NLT) Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness. By contrast, 1 John 4:6 (NLT) But



we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception. In addition John 8:47 (NLT) Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you dont listen because you dont belo ng to God.

Adherence to and emphasis on the basics of the Faith: the sacraments (especially the Eucharist and confession), the Mass, Papal teachings and Catechism, orthodox religious education in Catholic schools.

God is asking us to return to the faith and not to get taken in by the liberalism and modernist movements who are trying to change the faith and make it more to their progressive "accept anything" attitude and away for the teachings of Christ and the core Catholic faith and moral teachings as espoused by St. Pope John Paul the Second.

God is asking us to truly listen with prophetic hearts and to be bold in our response. To not settle for mediocracy, but to strive with passion and love for a Church and a world that acts in the best interests of humanity, creation and His Kingdom. It is too easy to fall into patterns of comfort, to maintain the status quo when you are on the "comfy" side of the fence and the 'busy-ness' of life distracts from the real issues that allow each person to know their worth as someone loved by God. God is asking us to act with this boldness and passion in particular areas of brokenness in our Church in Australia at the moment: Inclusivity, Belonging and Ownership: Too many people feel alienated from the Church in Australia. It is no longer acceptable for the Church to say that "all are welcome and included", whilst disqualifying them from full communion in the Church; not listening or dialoguing with prophetic hearts; not being overtly outspoken against discrimination. We are being asked to seriously enter into prophetic listening with those who feel disenfranchised and alienated by the Church: Young People, Women, Same-Sex Attracted; Divorced; Sexual Abuse Survivors; those suffering from Mental Health, Domestic Violence and other types of abuse. Many people refer to "the Church" as opposed to "my Church" or "our Church". This is due to feelings or experiences that have caused disempowerment as members of our community. The average lay person in a pew feels like a passive participant, rather than engaged and passionate about the Church. We are being called to be inclusive not just of the "groups" listed above, but of all people into decision-making and ownership of "our Church". This will take an overhaul of our Church structures and decision-making processes. Young People: Our Church is largely structured for the benefit of those with more years on their side. Every time a parish hosts a "Youth Mass" they are acknowledging that our liturgies are generally not appropriate for a positive sacramental encounter, or expression of faith, for a young person. Every time a "Youth Representative" position is created on a Parish Council, Outreach Board, or any other type of "Committee", we acknowledge that as a Church it is not our usual course of action to be inclusive of young people. Governance and Clericalism: We must seriously address the very real Governance issues of the Church in Australia. Bishops and Priests have very little to no accountability. There is no reason for this to be the case and such a structure is not replicated anywhere else in our global community. Abuse of many types occurs because of our very poor governance structure and it contributes to the growing and very dangerous issue of clericalism. Bishops and priests must be accountable and

that accountability needs to be inclusive of women, lay people, young people and a range of diversity amongst our community.

Over the time of praying for this and in the various discussions, there were three main phrases that I received in prayer. “By their fruits you shall know them.” (Matthew 7:16) From the level of the Bishops Conference and this Plenary Council down, a multitude of ideas for what God wants for the Church. But our starting point need not be to reinvent the wheel, as Our Lord gives us a measure: You will know them by their fruits. However it appears that we can fail to recognise, or even actively stifle, movements of the Holy Spirit in Australia because we are concerned about whether they conform to a particular novel ideology, or whether they make us feel uncomfortable, or if they are politically expedient. Instead, we should look to God’s will in them by looking at the fruits which they produce. By fruits, I mean whether people are coming into a real, intentional relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. When we look to the fruits God is producing, we can see where God is working in the Church in Australia. “Be not afraid” I have sensed that there is a somewhat natural truism present in youth ministry that youth are disinterested in prayer, in devotions, in the sacraments, and in living out and proclaiming the Catholic faith in a real, tangible way. Suggestions which promote these practices may be may be shut down at the discussion table in youth ministry and thus remain an untried truism. My own experience gives lie to this. I was a leader in a parish youth group for several years prior to my “conversion”, and at the time I was almost allergic to prayer, thought “evangelisation” was a dirty word, and had been to confession perhaps once during that entire period of my life. This changed when I was led by the Holy Spirit to attend a two week retreat which unashamedly lived out the faith. God used this experience to convert my heart. In recording testimonies for the Immaculata Mission School 2018, I was surprised to find that a consistent highlight was the daily hour-and-a-half Eucharistic Adoration. I’m not sure too many people would believe me if I said that 1.5 hours of Adoration was a highlight for millennials and Gen Zs at an event which featured plenty of fun, music and socialising! Holiness—My life changed when I discovered that I was created out of love by God, to live in a relationship with Him and am called to be with Him forever. I was fairly ignorant of the “call to holiness” prior to my conversion—this in spite of the fact that I attended Mass most weeks, helped run a parish youth group, received the Sacraments of Initiation and attended Catholic schools for 13 years. I do not think that my experience is a unique one—this means that many Catholics do not have an understanding of what it means to be Christian. [My full answer is in the attachment :)]

The Catholic education system has been in crisis for some time in many parts of this country and has failed to provide sound formation in the faith and morals so necessary to strengthen young people in their faith before they enter adult life. Many teachers are not practising Catholics and they are ill equipped to teach Catholic students. In addition, the faith is watered down to appease the non-Catholic students who form a sizable percentage of the students in Catholic schools. The whole system needs an overhaul and a back to basics approach to faith formation with a strong focus on the moral formation of our young people who are encountering a world that is directly opposed of all that we believe about human sexuality and the inherent dignity of every person. The Church should be unafraid to speak the Truth especially when confronted with laws and groups that seek to undermine and devalue the inherent dignity of the human person from the



unborn to the old and infirm. Too often the Church in Australia is distracted by issues such as climate change, refugees, and so called tolerance, that it fails to lead strongly on issues such as abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage, gender fluidity and sex education. Instead, it is fearful of 'offending certain groups and seems too occupied with being politically correct. The greatest hope in the Australian Church today is the formation and active presence of new religious communities several of which we are blessed to have here in [ - ]. They are joyful and eager to proclaim the Faith and their love of Jesus and Mary and the Church. Young people love them and are attracted to what they offer—they proclaim the truth with joy and live it themselves. The bishops must show courageous leadership at this time of enormous and fast moving social change. Those that have the gift for speaking publicly should proclaim Catholic truths wherever they go and engage with the secular media to ensure the Church's voice is heard at every opportunity. There is a thirst for the truth out there that we need to address. Dissenting voices within the Church especially those that hold powerful positions in the Church should be silenced. They are leading the faithful astray. Bishops should also ensure that their priests receive ongoing priestly formation, retreats and support to strengthen them in their vocation. In light of recent revelations both here and overseas, the Church is under vehement attack from those that hate her and seek to destroy Catholic influence and freedom in this country. The Church must root out evil in her midst and have zero tolerance for any form of abuse or sexual misconduct by her priests and religious. The liberal left leaning media and intelligentsia are revelling in the opportunity to impugn the Church in every possible way. We need to fight back and show that our faith and foundation is in Christ and his teachings and boldly proclaim them and Him as Lord and Saviour of all!!! Please pray and act.

To be a more open universal Church for the world to see and aspire to be a part of. This includes enough internal pastoral care to ensure that Catholics present a positive, joyful and welcoming atmosphere in their daily lives. Keeping to the old traditions of the Catholic Church is a must as it provides a solid background/foundation for which people can rely on.

1. God is asking us to reform the Catholic Church. All changes of modern world to be addressed 1. Contraception 2. Abortion 3. LGBTQI. Accept all the above 3 into the Church. Views around contraception to be changed to fit the changing views of sustainable future of the planet and family units Abortion of victims of rape. Young girls who have made mistakes. The Church can view all cases on individual reasons for LGBTQI to be welcome and accepted to the Church. Marriage between to be accepted and offered in the Catholic Church. Teach scripture in schools and churches both The Old Testament and new testaments. I do not believe women should be ordained. It is the role for the male. Man in the image of God I do not believe priests should marry I believe Holy Spirit is asking us to Live the Way of our Lord. The Church has lost its way and scripture has the answers. If people could see the link it would be so easy to preach and live by teachings. Ministering the teachings of the Church by youth as well. Door knocking to spread the word and ask why they are not attending Mass. Sexual abuse has shocked the Church. This is the crumbling of the Church and George Pell is the scapegoat. He was responsible to take care of the children. The priests who committed crimes were moved around and truth hidden. Now the Church must confess all the crimes. They must build the Church from the base. Break it apart and return to the truth—The 10 commandments to be

the core. The proverbs and parables have the teachings. Church is concerned with wealth and possessions. Holy Spirit tells me that the Franciscan and Jesuit's order are the way—A life of simplicity. Catholic Churches to open up their buildings to house the poor and homeless. The Church must recruit clergy to be teachers in our Catholic schools Catholic schools are accepting all even non-believers. Without caring to convert. Is it for money only? The religious education in the schools is not serving the faith. They must be more proactive in educating for the sacraments. Lies and greed are at core of the demise of Pell and will be the cause of the end of the Catholic Church. People are following core beliefs of goodness, love and justness in other religions. Yet Catholics losing numbers because of the hypocrisy within the hierarchy. The Church has too much power and money. Distribution of wealth can serve the poor. The youth are the future of the Church. Listen to them. Give them a voice. The youth are the ones who will be the future. The Church must teach climate change, justice, and modern family units The Church must accept all. Australians have difficulty relating to priests from different countries. Not because they are racist but the language barrier and cultural barrier. Look at ways of recruiting priests. Who will be the priests of the future? Lay people who have chosen not to marry. Disciples and apostles of the modern day.

I believe God is asking us to become radical Christian witnesses who live out the Gospel message. I believe God wants to raise up more Saints. It seems we are living in times where the faith amongst many Catholics has become a tradition or simply a small part of one's life. I believe God is calling us to real change and to a relationship with Him that above all else. Only in this way will we be open to the Holy Spirit and allow God to work through us. Otherwise, if we continue to work in our own strength, then we only need to look at where we are now as a Church to see where that will take us. The one thing common in every age since Christ's death—despite many difficulties and persecutions that the Church has faced—are radical witnesses (Saints) that God has raised up to be a light to the world. I believe God is calling us to have courage and become radical. To live lives that are centred on Him. Lives of prayer, fasting, the Sacraments, and an obsessive love for Jesus. In the past, I have experienced in others (and myself) a kind of lukewarm approach to the faith. An approach which basically says, "I believe in God, and He fits into how I want to live life in the following ways...." I think God wants us to stop fitting Him into our lives as though He's an optional extra, and start making Him the centre of all that we do. Can you imagine a Church which is on fire for Christ? That would be something remarkable, and I believe God wants the remarkable. Following on from this, I believe God is calling the Church to become a missionary Church focused on evangelisation. I believe He wants to transform parishes into missionary centres focused on bringing others close to Christ, as opposed to centres which resemble palliative care wards, where priests and ministers seem happy to simply be caretakers of dying parishes. The core message of the Gospel that Christ charged the apostles with is quite simple; spread the Good News! Make Christians of all nations! That is why I believe God is calling us to do this, because He made it clear as day that this is what He wants us to do! For this to happen, parishes need to start supporting those who are wanting to live radical Christian lives. I am privileged to know many people like this, and it's sad for me to see that they seem to be viewed as weird, crazy and people who aren't normal Catholics. If the parish can start to better

support such people, they will then be able to have a greater capacity to evangelise and the parish will thrive. Please see attached for further two points...

Faithfulness. By that, I mean a rich, full faithfulness to Him, to following Him, to being witnesses to Him, to being courageous for Him, to praying to Him, to spending time with Him in Eucharistic adoration (if possible), to loving others because of Him, to drawing others to Him, to live the commandments He has asked of us. I think God is calling us to a fruitful faithfulness, not a sterile, or a dying, or a cutting-back faith. A fruitful faithfulness is a life lived in love—as in, in love with Jesus—and that makes Jesus the number one priority. Like a marriage is called to be fruitful, our faithfulness should bear fruit in people who we encounter coming to know Jesus, love Him and follow Him. A fruitful faithfulness is not afraid of difficulties, because we belong to the Father who raised Jesus from the dead. I think particularly of things like the lack of clergy in some areas: a fruitful faithfulness does not say, We need to change Jesus plan for the priesthood because things are tough right now. Instead, we increase our prayer for vocations and try to foster them through discipling young people, inviting them to grow in the knowledge and love of God, and helping them grow deeper in prayer so that they can discover Jesus plan for their lives. For some, holy marriages, for others, consecrated life. To be fruitful, I really believe we need to make Eucharistic adoration not only readily available, but the centre of our prayer lives—that of each Christian and each parish. It puts Christ at the centre, absolutely. It is obvious that we worship and follow Jesus when we are willing to waste an hour or two in His presence, when we enthrone Him on the altar of our churches. Adoration allows us to draw close to Jesus, and drink deeply of all that He wants to give us. Without drawing close to Christ, how can we be fruitful? And yes, we can and should always draw close to Him—He is present in our souls—but He deliberately came in the Eucharist as a gift for us. And Eucharistic adoration will help prepare our hearts for that ultimate union of faithful fruitfulness: when we receive Him in Holy Communion, and allow Him to transform us, lead us. Then hopefully we will be able to live more deeply that faithful fruitfulness He calls us to, even to the point of martyrdom, in imitation of Him. I think whatever struggles and difficulties we face as a Church right now, the answer is, like John the Beloved, to lean into Jesus, listen to His heartbeat and draw from His strength and love. Then, with Marys help, we will hopefully be able to stand faithful with Jesus at the Cross. I think Jesus is asking that we be all in for Him. Not half in. Not according to our wants, desires, ideas of Him or the Church, but all in for the teaching He gave to the apostles, and which has been handed on faithfully by so many beautiful popes, bishops, priests, religious and lay Christians. We are asked to be faithful and love to the giving of our life. John 12:24.

1. Charity I am saddened by the state of division within our Church which as a young religious, I have observed to form a sort of “elitism” among groups and an attitude of “I know better than you because I follow this particular way”. What I have often seen is a pitting of differing charisms against one another, which defeats the whole purpose of the charisms—gifts to the Church and help make up the body of Christ. The bickering and slandering that I see is quite alarming, no wonder that many people have turned their backs on the Church and have stopped believing in Christ. Gandhi once said “I’d be a Christian, if it were not for Christians” because he saw a lack of charity within the Church. This division is scandalous and a great sorrow, because there is already so much division

in our world. Unity is a source of hope in this time and we need to make this a priority, as it is the prayer of Christ before He died, that we would be one as He and the Father are one. I also want to make a special note of the slander and negative criticism towards the charismatic renewal. I am appalled by the way people often make snide remarks, or jokes at the expense of others regarding a genuine movement within the Church, which the current and previous Popes have supported, Pope Francis calling it a “current of grace” for the Church. Look at the many initiatives that have arisen in this country such as Ignite Youth Conference, Disciples Summer School, Stronger Retreats and the Immaculata Mission School, to name a few: they have all “charismatic” elements, and have been sources of grace and conversion for young people in this country. We cannot deny the good fruits that this renewal has had on the Church. I myself began a consistent prayer life after attending a Disciples Summer School in 2002. I want to make note of the many “faithful Catholics” I have met who make nasty and hurtful comments about this movement at the expense of others. I know when I was younger, I felt often ashamed to say I was charismatic and often felt like I was second class. I know I am not alone in this matter.

2. Prayer Prayer needs to become the centre again and we need to help young people discover the need for prayer and thus relationship with God. One thing that I have seen in my years in youth ministry and as a religious Sister is that young people love opportunities for Adoration. Extended hours of Eucharistic Adoration needs to be made more widely in our Church and young people actually want it but often comment to me that there’s hardly anywhere where they can go! This desire for Adoration surely points to a sign of our time and I believe plays an important part in renewing our culture.

Get rid of the homosexuals in the priesthood, ban Catholics from being freemasons again, bring back the Latin Mass and bring back tradition. Direct parishioners how to vote in elections and have influence again in society. Stop watering down the Church doctrine to please degenerates and enemies of the Church. Bring back headscarfs and sacred silence. No women leadership as the Bible forbids it.

To turn to Him first—to put God first in all things, in our decisions, in our liturgy and worship, in our relationships, and in our ambitions. I believe we are being asked to repent and believe; to learn to trust God once more by turning from all we hold dear that is not of God, and to in turn believe that He is God and that we are loved and created with purpose. As part of this turning back to Him, I believe we are being called not simply to believe that God exists, but that what God has asked of us through Sacred Scripture and the action of Holy Spirit in the Church is for our great benefit. Trust Him.

In St Faustinas diary Jesus appeared to her scourged and beaten and said "the Bride must resemble the Bridegroom". The Church needs adversity to be what it ought to be. In periods of history where it has held too much worldly power and influence it has also been at its sickest. The Church should resemble Christ: persecuted, hated, but holy. That is to say that we need to stop running the Church as though it were a business. We should not be concerned about the Catholic brand or making reforms to bring the Church into the modern world. The Church need not bend over backward to gain the favour of the world. The Church does not need any more committees, administrators or protocols. What we need is saints. Many of the saints were great reformers, but they didnt seek to bring about reform as much as they sought to live lives in radical surrender to the Holy Spirit. Further,

we do not need to make the message relevant—it is relevant by its very nature! What we need are authentic witnesses—because it is witnesses that make the message attractive by living it in a radical way with joy. I feel we are being called to return to the spirit of the early Church. This was a Church that followed Christ to the cross, who made great sacrifices daily, who risked and gave everything to live by and witness to the Truth. This was a Church who evangelised fearlessly, and who knew this as their reason for being. A Church who was so docile to the work of the Holy Spirit that signs and wonders accompanied them as Christ promised. A Church who lived so radically for the Gospel that they gave all they had to the mission. Sharing all their resources in common.

God is asking us to respect each other. We are one body of many parts. We are diverse in race, gender, age and social economic status. God is asking us to embrace each other, not judge each other. To support with love everyone in society, especially those in need as we would support members of our own family. God is asking us to be welcoming—where are the poor, the disabled, the homeless, those who are suffering with mental and physical health problems in our churches or are we becoming a Church where the rules and being a respectful member of society with a nice car and clothing are more important than the person themselves. That we are a more transparent Church that does not hide behind the vestments, but exposes its wounds and asks for mercy.

Pope Francis has once again called us all to holiness. He asks us "not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence," I believe the Church has become lukewarm without the fire of God's love that inflamed the early church. We may not be happy with the church or the reputation the church has in society, we need to start afresh and do everything with great love of God and His people. Australia is the land of The Holy Spirit and we need to listen to the Holy Spirit at this time in our history in all the decisions we make. We need to become like Jesus and ensure all our attitudes and actions are filled with love. We need to recapture our origins when every Christian participated in spreading the gospel. The laity are not just there to serve the religious but to use the gifts of the Spirit given at their confirmation. Lay people have access to more secular areas and by being witnesses of God's love can bring many to know Christ through their actions. The layperson in the Church needs to be genuinely working together as a community, equal in God's eyes with the clergy and should be treated as such. The Church needs to get back to its roots and lose any superiority by the clergy thinking they are of more importance than the lay people in their congregation. In a consumerist society with the emphasis on self we must all proclaim the good news with joy in our hearts to show there is another path to personal happiness and knowing in your heart you are loved by God and nothing can change that. The child sexual abuse scandal has caused a major credibility crisis that will take years to fix and makes it hard for people to listen to us proclaim the moral truths of the gospel. However we will be believed if we are authentic and show we are humbled and in need of reformation. The Church must show love, compassion and listen to those who accuse us. People will eventually believe if they see how we live, thinking of others. To achieve this every Christian must first work on themselves and really live the Gospel values. [What] people trust more is witnesses living true to their faith than in any teaching. We must first be infused with God's love through the Holy Spirit and allow that to flow out to loving others. Everyone in the Church must listen to the Holy Spirit, to the Word of God, spend time in personal prayer and generous self-giving so we will be seen to be real in our faith.



We all need to be seen as loving Mass, the Sacraments and first and foremost giving praise and thanks to God always. The Church in Australia at this time needs to get back to the grass roots of Pentecost. To use the charisms of the Holy Spirit and to bring people to a personal relationship with Jesus. We need to bring about unity within the Church, all working together for the good of all.

To be more open and welcoming towards those in a mixed marriage situation. Not to be so restricted by rules and regulations. The ordinary person is not concerned with canon law but just want to be accepted as one searching for the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit. Welcome those that have gone through divorce with a more compassionate heart. Give greater consideration to Reconciliation by the Third Rite, in order to bring more people into the Church. We, the people, are the Church and we must walk side by side.

Being a youth in the Church and a part of a youth group, we are learning a lot about our faith, but sometimes answers to our questions are not 100% correct and therefore we aren't learning the real reasons behind some of the Church's teachings. If we don't understand the meaning behind something it is easier to lose our faith. We need strong teachers and leaders in our Church, leaders that won't water down the real meaning behind things. And that when asked a difficult question they can answer it correctly and confidently. Giving a security to the community they are leading.

For the Church to be a more relevant Church of and for its people—with equality for all, where each person is listened to and treated with respect, dignity and acceptance, regardless of gender, race, marital status, etc., and valued for the gifts they each bring to their Church community.

I think God is asking us to take a good hard look at the way the institution of the Church operates. We need to change the structure of the Church. Women should be at the top of the structure. Too few people (men) have all the power presently which as we know has had a devastating impact. We should have single and married priests and also female deacons and Priests. The bishops have far too much power. When a bishop is being selected for a diocese, there should be consultation with the people of the diocese. There should also be consultation about priests being assigned to parishes. For example, we recently had a very community minded priest move to another parish and our Archbishop replaced him with a very traditional priest with very expensive tastes which has had consequences for that Church community. The priests should be able to address with the bishop his style of leadership and if warranted a change should be made. The Church needs to open up to be inclusive of people who don't sit comfortably in the currently structure of the Church e.g. divorced and same-sex etc. They should be able to fully participate in the Church and receive holy Eucharist. Many people are guided by their relationship with God and their conscience and are doing so despite what the Church says. We need to listen to the four generations of people who are no longer part of our Church community. The Church in many instances to me, appears to be a business and not that pastoral. I believe to create real community, opportunity should be provided for priests, religious and lay people who have common spirituality could share accommodation and go out to the people, come home & pray and share their faith together.

For all women and men to be accepted by our faith community.
To be a listening caring community open to change which must happen.
To be a Church that listens, learns & responds to young peoples concerns; to be an active, inclusive & relevant Church that works to create a better world in the image of Jesus Christ. Such a Church focused on kindness, compassion and social justice for the poor and marginalised rather than reliance on doctrine, rules and regulations. If the Church wants to re-establish and maintain relevance, the barriers of inclusion must be removed. Our Church should not persist with structures that fail to convey the message of the gospel to the deep yearnings of men and women of today. The Church needs to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate that women are a rich resource for the Church. The place of women in the Church must be equal to that of males. Priests particularly must learn to minister in relationship with one another and with their community. Bishops and priests need to accept that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts differently and freely to all baptised. Steps need to be taken to harness those gifts. That the Church genuinely models inclusion, equality, acceptance & advocacy for those who do not have a voice, including refugees, justice for victims of sexual abuse by clergy, and the families of survivors.
<p>A listening Church where what I say matters. Where my opinions are valued. A Church where we are all involved in its day to day affairs. Where we are not looked upon as the little people. Where we are treated with respect, honour and dignity. Where we can feel we belong.</p> <p>To wake up to the words of He who is Jesus Christ. To put aside all feelings of pomp and grandeur. For the Church to have greater transparency in their dealings with us who are the Church.</p>
Heal the damage that has been caused to the Church and Gods message by the clergy. People have lost faith in coming to church. I think people believe the Church has become a cartel looking out only for themselves and not serving the people.
I think this is a very difficult time for the Church in Australia. Its a time of uncertainty and in some ways a time of famine. Its a desert time. Many of us are earnestly searching for manna in that desert but it isn't easy. As a pilgrim people we have sinned on our journey and are walking with our heads cast down; as is right and proper at this time. The sins of our fathers are being visited on our children for our Church has lost its moral authority and as a result they will not follow. I feel this truth deeply as a Catholic mother of six sons who don't see much light within our Church. They deeply respect and honour my love for her but they are not prepared to embrace her as their own. There is a heavy-hearted sadness I must carry within myself which is being multiplied as grandchildren are being born and my sons choose to protect them from a Church they do not trust. Its worse in the outlying areas. In the major cities the truth about child abuse within our Church is being revealed but in outlying areas the damage has not been acknowledged. In [ - ], for example where many of these poor, unwell men were sent to practice, the damage has been tremendous. In small communities you know who the perpetrators and the victims are—we all know—and yet newcomers who come to our shores expect us to dance to tunes that reflect their evangelical ambitions. They fail to see that what we need is healing not saving. I pray that



Jesus the healer comes to us during this desert time and that we welcome him with humility and not with fanfare.

God wants us to bring the good news to everyone. He expects us to be cognisant of where and when we are living and to adapt to our situation. There are many barriers to people hearing the good news in Australia now. The sex abuse by clergy and the cover up by the hierarchy is the worst thing. The competition from a secular culture is a massive hurdle. Lack of young people staying in our Church is not a good omen for the future. We do Catholic schools well, with the help of government money, but many churches run on just the good will of parishioners who are often aged. God, I believe, is asking us to assess the signs of the times and get some good strategies for both maintenance and mission. The availability of the third rite of reconciliation is vital to re-invigorate the use of this sacrament, which has been damaged, and may well be subject to government interference in the first rite mode. Priests and bishops need to realise that they are people of God, servants, not princes. Lay participation in authentic ways is an important part to any growth in the Church in Australia. Women should be treated as people, not 'the other'. How ridiculous!! A strong and dynamic connection between schools, priests and parishioners in the religious formation of young people will aid in handing on the faith. The admirable work of Catholic agencies in promoting social justice and serving the poor and needy should be promoted among Catholics and the wider population more. A distinction between piety and good works is not helpful. They go hand in hand. Politics should be left to individuals, operating with informed consciences. No bishop should publicly support one party over another. Plenaries or synods should be a regular thing. My diocese has no annual report, no financial figures available and there are nepotistic and unfair employment practices. More transparency, more honesty and happier faithful! I'm sure God didn't ask us for secrecy. Parish councils should operate universally in a fruitful partnership with the parish priest and diocese.

#### CONTRIBUTION TO 20/20 PLENARY

a. Reason for contribution: The sexual abuse crisis demonstrated to me that the problem arose from the very power structure of the Catholic Church. Wherever the conditions were put under scrutiny, the same problem emerged. This convinced me that radical changes have to be made to bring the Church back to the kind of community Jesus could be proud of, the kind of community shaped by the power of the Holy Spirit. Also, the 20/20 Plenary filled me with the hope that my thoughts would be listened to and seriously considered. Thank you for this opportunity.

b. Courage to make the contribution I felt that the story of the poor bent over woman (Luke 13) spoke directly to me: "Satan has held her bound for eighteen years—was it not right to untie her bonds on the Sabbath day?" So here I am, straightened up and speaking what I think.

#### c. Basic principles

i. No human being should be thrust into situation of power without accountability; either in public or private life.

ii. In Mark 10:18 we read: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." The ordained should not have to wear the burden of "holiness" and "goodness"—it has to

be false by the Lord's own words. The ordained therefore, must not be made "special" in the worst possible sense of the word, marked by signs of false holiness such as, celibacy and maleness.

iii. The People of God, that is, all the baptised, are holy through God's presence in the community. Those ordained should represent the diversity existing in this body: male, female, celibate, married, gay, straight, disabled, etc.

iv. The Church is for the salvation of the world—light to the nations.

v. Within the Church the diversity and richness of gifts are to be identified, celebrated and used for mission.

d. The ordained

i. The ordained are the servants within the Body of Christ.

ii. They serve according to their gifts, just like everyone else. By vocation and training there are "the professionals" in pastoral work, liturgy, Scripture, etc.

iii. Congregations have the responsibility to engage the services of the ordained, the professional servants, and to work in collaborative partnership with them.

iv. The ordained have accountability to their congregation who employ them (vertical accountability) and to the "professional body" of which they are a member (lateral accountability). A presbyterium would be such a body.

v. Bishops serve the priests and the laity in collaboration and synodality.

vi. The pope, being the "servant of servants" also has accountability to the laity, and to the ordained.

To be bold. We need to be bold in our thinking: revisiting the ways of the past, reassessing the needs of the present, rethinking our path into the future. We need to be bold in facing our failings: of governance, of messaging, of ministry. We need to be bold in our doing: following Christ to the margins, bringing His mercy to all. We need to talk less and do more. We need to maintain a sincere dialogue with our times, not habitually and reflexively oppose them. We need to build the kingdom, not retreat into castles. We need more humility, less self-inflicted humiliation. We should stop talking so much about sex. Instead, our core messaging should follow Christ. It should focus on mercy and salvation, charity and compassion, justice and Jesus. We need to open ourselves to the gifts within our Church, and make the Church a gift to our nation, a guiding light for the Church in a changing world. To do this, we need concrete measures. We should ask Rome for a relaxation of compulsory celibacy for priests.



## **RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2**

*What questions about the future of  
the Church in Australia  
would you like the  
Plenary Council to consider?*

## QUESTIONS FOR PLENARY COUNCIL

Participants were also asked to submit questions about the future of the Church in Australia for the Plenary Council to consider. The question put to participants was:

*What questions about the future of the Church in Australia would you like the Plenary Council to consider?*

Responses to this question were examined for consent both for the publishing of their de-identified submission online and for sharing their de-identified submission with their diocese. Questions were also checked for comprehension and duplicate questions were identified. From this, a sample list of questions indicative of the submissions from your diocese was developed. This list is as follows:

1. What steps are being taken to break through clericalism so that all voices are genuinely heard?
2. Why cant priests marry?
3. Why cant women become priests?
4. Why do our priests have to wear robes at Mass?
5. Is the relevance and importance of the Eucharist taught to our kids in Catholic schools?
6. How do we measure attendance at church in regards to being an instrument of Gods love and will?
7. How can we enhance parish-school relationships that allow a mutually respectful relationship to nurture the spiritual growth of all participants?
8. How can the profile of the priest be promoted as a good shepherd?
9. How is the Church going to be ministered in the future?
10. Can the Plenary Council explore and provide new approaches to evangelisation, which will build and sustain unity across the Australian context?
11. How does the Church engage young people? Is the Church considering going to young people?
12. How do we address the elephant in the room that many people who identify themselves as Catholic do not accept the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church?
13. Who will lead the Church in the next 50-100 years in Australia? Especially bearing in mind the reduced number of priests and holy orders.
14. How do lay people participate in the Church now that families are busy working (both parents), travelling and striving for more materialistic things?
15. What role do couples without children, single and gay people as well as newly arrived immigrants and refugees have in our community?
16. How can the Church build and value ways of being a grass roots Church, listening and engaging with ordinary people?
17. Could the Church consider appointing a "Church Ombudsman" to hear and consider issues of concern in Church life without fear for those involved, and providing confidence they will be addressed?
18. What steps will the Church take to implement appraisal and accountability for bishops and priests?
19. Women were an integral part of the early Church, and affirmed as such by Jesus. Why are they so devalued and isolated by the Church today?
20. How can the Church make the appointment of bishops and Archbishops more transparent and less secretive, hierarchical and patriarchal?

21. How will we work collaboratively in the future to be the synodal Church Pope Francis is calling us to be?
22. How will women be included in full ministry, sacramental, pastoral and governance, within the Church?
23. How can the Church give leadership in responding to the call of *Laudato Si* to care for the earth?
24. How can we be a sign of Christ's love and compassion for young people and those estranged from the Church?
25. How can we overcome the clericalism Pope Francis has condemned?
26. Why does the Church still believe that women cannot be ordained? Are women not equal in the eyes of God? Are men more important to God?
27. How can we, as the people of God, develop more pride and courage in owning our Catholic identity in the face of negativity and outside secular forces?
28. How can the Church become more aware of and responsive to the huge changes taking place in society and culture, and the economic pressures on people today?
29. How can the Church continue the healing process within our community and the wider community after the Royal Commission?
30. Will the Church be more involved in schools?
31. How can Catholic schools be supported to evangelise young people?
32. What will the Church do to remove the barriers that prevent people of the LGBTI community from participating in the life of the Church, when they choose to be in a loving relationship with another? What would Jesus do in any given circumstances?
33. How can the Church be the MODEL of inclusion, rather than remain lagging behind the wider community in this regard?
34. What are the barriers to inclusion of all within the Church and do we have the courage to overcome them?
35. How will bishops and priests make room in our Church's governance, organisation and structure for the laity to use their gifts?
36. What steps will be taken to ensure each bishop has a synodal approach to addressing significant issues in his diocese? What steps will be taken to ensure that the faithful have a means of redress when bishops and priests depart from synodal processes?
37. What will the Church do to place greater emphasis on the release of refugees from detention on Manus and Nauru?
38. How are we going to ensure our Catholic Schools regain their Catholic identity and mission?
39. How can we help Catholics to recognise the vocation and proper role of the laity in the life of the Church?
40. Can we establish catechetical institutes to provide a systematic catechesis to adults in parishes?
41. Can we ensure that the RCIA process is promoted and offered in its fullness (liturgical, catechetical, pastoral dimensions) in parishes?
42. Is it possible to reconcile the ultra-traditional Catholics with the Novus Ordo Mass?
43. Can there be a strong statement on unity within the Church at this time?
44. Will the Church in Australia commit to stronger transparency and dialogue with the wider community?
45. How can we engage the youth of today to be a functioning part of the Catholic Church and for them to understand the importance of celebrating the Mass?
46. What should be the role of the laity in Church leadership?
47. Why has there been a failure of Catholic education to educate our children in the faith? - Should Sunday catechism classes be considered?

48. How does the Church plan to become more missionary-focused?
49. Is the Church happy to continue in crisis mode or will it do something about the current state of being?
50. What strategies can the Church take to become agents of the new evangelisation?
51. How can parishes become better Christian, loving communities?
52. What does the Church plan to do in order to create experiences where people can have a genuine encounter with God?





## RESPONSES TO QUESTION 3

*Would you like to share a story  
about your experience of faith  
or of the Church in Australia  
that has shaped you?*



## STORIES OF FAITH OR CHURCH SHARED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3

The stories in this section were shared in response to the third question: *Would you like to share a story about your experience of faith or of the Church in Australia that has shaped you?*

In keeping with the guidelines of consent explained earlier in the report, these stories are only from those individuals or groups from your diocese who consented to having their submission being made public and being shared with their diocese. About 30 per cent of all responses did not have consent for one or both of these criteria and therefore, their stories have not been included here.

My most significant experience has been as a bishop, and in fact the Archbishop of [ - ].
My experience of remaining in Church and working actively as a teacher and leader within it was formed by the model and example of self-less service of great mentors and teachers, through being trusted and given meaningful roles in youth ministry and as a young teacher and in parish and then support in my early years of teaching. Scholarships for young Catholics to study teaching at university, focussed support for programs of youth workers and Youth Ministry in schools and engaging youth in social justice and advocacy programs are my suggestion. My early involvement with older parishioners involved in St Vincent de Paul—meeting to share their faith and wisdom followed up by a practical response (a visit) was the most meaningful for me in exploring, deepening and growing my own faith.
I was born in 1946 and raised Catholic by a loving Mum and Dad. Dad was not a Catholic but supported Mum and I in our religious practices. I attended Catholic schools and was really taught to FEAR the Lord in these formative years ... I learned to Love the Lord much later in life. I left school at 15, joined a CYO and met my future wife of 50 years in this period. After working in offices and in retail, I became a teacher in Catholic schools and colleges at age 35 and also deepened my Catholic faith over a number of years by attending pilgrimages to Fatima, Lourdes and Medjugorje. My faith in God has not come from my formal Catholic Education but from many LIFE EXPERIENCES ... some of which seemed miraculous to me at the time (I have been truly blessed!). Both my wife and I are really passionate about our faith but also, we are extremely introverted people who find it difficult to speak about our beliefs in public ... (Not very courageous is it!). So this opportunity to share our thoughts about the current condition of the Catholic Church in Australia is (for us) seen as yet another blessing. For us, prayer has always been just TALKING WITH GOD and so we will continue to ask OUR Lord Jesus AND our Holy Mother Mary, to provide you with the answers you seek and also the COURAGE to make changes for the ultimate good of the Catholic Church in Australia and indeed, around the world.
As a child in our parish at the end of Sunday Mass we would always say 3 Hail Marys for the conversion of Russia. The scandal of abuse in so many countries is so dreadful that I

find it incredible that we have not a prayer at this time in the Mass so that every time a Mass is heard we are praying for victims in all countries.
I like to read.
Many experiences of working with the marginalised. Studying theology has opened my eyes to the possibilities of the real Church Jesus intended. Good men and women of faith.
Feel saddened that so many people feel disengaged from the Church and dont feel welcome to be a part of the Church.
Our experiences indicate a need to explore and foster ways across Australia to invite and welcome all.
When I was a beginning teacher and young leader the Sacramental programs in my school was the highlight of the school year for both school and parish. A small single stream school would fill the Cathedral in [ - ]. The Sacrament of Confirmation would have students and often parents being Confirmed. The programs created a sense of community and belonging. The decision to take the Sacraments out of the schools has had a drastic impact. Sacramental programs are not working in the parishes with my current school only having 4 students receiving Communion at school Masses (out of 200 students). Families are craving and seeking community and unfortunately, our parishes are struggling to offer this. Parishes dont have the manpower or expertise to cater for the young of today in Australia. We need to be creative and form a sense of community that our parishes have offered in the past.
As a child in the 1980s, growing up in a wonderful full church. Being involved in ministry, guitars on knees, youth groups where everyone felt accepted and welcome. Mass in our lounge room. Guildford Young and the 80s Vatican II priests full of life and ideas. Reaching out and embracing the current time for what it was. Rejoicing in our faith knowing we were living in the current world and making a real difference with social justice. In actual fact, this has shaped me hugely. And that is why I am so affected, upset and only just hanging in with the current climate of despair in our diocese.
Since arriving in Australia in 1974, the Catholic Church has been a great support to me in new family relationships, my career and helped me to be part of a vibrant faith community. I am continuing to learn about my faith journey and am guided by the Holy Spirit.
The Church in Australia did not shape me, God did. My faith was given to me at birth by God, and was nurtured by my parents, then my education, but when I was old enough, by my love of God whom I had found to be all that I had grown to know and love and had learned from childhood. God and I have had a very long relationship. I am Irish and I find Catholicism here is very casual and in some instances is engineered to suit the particular choices of some people. Confession is a rare event, sin is rarely mentioned and there is a paucity of role models for young people.
I have recently heard of many miraculous stories about the original priest who founded our parish. I think it would be marvellous to put together an Australian Catholic book on these types of recounts—they would be very uplifting for others to read.

Compared with worship in other countries and cultures, the Australian church has always felt a bit like a Church that has lost its way and is rushing about trying to make itself popular with the people.

Ive been so grateful for [ - ] church in [ - ] offering Eucharistic adoration every morning with the church being left open, its been a wonderful experience to have that flexibility to be able to pray in front of the blessed sacrament any time Im in town in the mornings. 😊 And Ive been very grateful for all the priests and religious serving the people despite many difficulties and struggles in todays climate

Having little children at Mass has made me appreciate the challenges faced for families participating in the Mass. The church environment isn't suited to children, it's hard to keep them quiet, long sermons that are too sophisticated lose the point, Mass times unfriendly (18:00 Children's vigil = bed and bath time!), Children's liturgy is often colouring in and there isn't a change table! We swapped parishes to a 9:30 Mass with a charismatic priest and elderly yet VERY welcoming and diverse congregation. The inner city and frequent tourist attendance seems to make this parish special. Children aren't tolerated but celebrated and there is less stuffy pomp and ceremony. The Mass concludes with children "playing" musical instruments. This keeps the little ones happy. The choir is in the congregation and Mass is celebrated in less than an hour. I really love going to this church with my children. If not for this Mass, I wouldn't be able to attend until my children are older.

I grew up under Communism, where you feared for your own and your familys life with every unconsidered word that left your mouth. That fear is ingrained deep inside me. So it was very sad that I experienced the same crippling fear during the same sex marriage campaign. I felt an outcast for intending to vote "yes", and unworthy Catholic. Every homily made reference to the issue, and emphasised that there was only one way of looking at the question—not my way. I was hoping for some opportunity for debate or discussion. There was none. I find it sad that my Church can conduct itself like any totalitarian state. Why couldnt the Church invite informed debate? The traditional view of marriage could have been presented in a more tolerant atmosphere. This would have shown the Church to be a listening Church, and it would have saved me much angst and feeling of isolation.

It's all about clergy and they could not care less about this submission. Feel free to prove me wrong. Amen.

- There are far too many examples of consultation appearing to take place and then being totally ignored
- A parishioner who supported child abuse victims in court was devastated when on questioning a Senior Catholic Cleric appearing for the defendant, she was asked haughtily "And who do you think you are?"
- A woman whose marriage had failed at last found a listening compassionate priest was able to "undo" twenty years of separation from the Church (over a misunderstanding perpetuated initially by a "clerical" insensitive priest).

- A wife with 12 children finally left a “good Catholic marriage” when a lifetime of mental abuse became physical. Her long time parish priest found her to be “in the wrong” and would no longer allow her to be “active” in the parish. (He apologised on her deathbed!) A new inner city Parish she moved to temporarily had a wonderful compassionate Irish priest who welcomed them all with open arms and integrated them into the parish. What a contrast!!
  - When compiling a history of our local church (which is 150 years old) so many stories came to light of marriages taking place in the sacristy, of family members unable to attend marriages in other churches etc. and of the hurt and resentment caused by insensitive, “clerical” approaches at the time. This misunderstanding still remains today...
  - A lady spoke of her recent experience of “clericalism” through the delivery of a homily (shouting) and how it really disturbed her.
  - A woman in our group was a student at a Catholic College during the time a convicted paedophile was there. His abuse of her and her sister left her confused and in a dark space and it has taken her years to move on from what the “Church” did in response to the event then, and during the time, his case went to court. She dreads going back to a time when reputation means more than Christian beliefs and values.
  - Several were upset and angry when the Office of Evangelisation wrote in the local Catholic paper “In our eagerness to draw people to Christ have we become too pastoral, too inclusive?” Should we not be MORE pastoral and inclusive?
  - In a Sunday sermon, was talking about something and said “even” divorced people... I felt alienated from the rest of the congregation because I am separated from my husband.
- 
- The sexual abuse issue has totally destroyed the myth of “them” being better or more important than us. Our Archbishop does not want to engage in discussion with us about it...
  - Religious women especially deserve a much stronger voice in the Church.
  - Many talented, capable, faith-filled lay people are so limited in what and how they can be involved in ministry.
  - All agreed that being a welcoming, safe, inclusive, humble community where all are valued and supported is the first step—and we can all contribute to this with the encouragement of our clergy and Bishops/Archbishops.
- ## • A nun who has worked as a Parish Sister in a regional town, spoke of a period when the Parish Priest was very unwell. She took on the load of preparing liturgies, preparing young people to receive the sacraments, providing the pastoral care required by parishioners, preparing funerals, and a visiting priest was flown in when possible. She experienced many “putdowns” by some of these priests despite her best efforts (and to the parishioners’ dismay).
- Parish workers in outback communities—usually women—seem to be very effective
  - A woman told of living on Norfolk Island for several years. There was no resident priest, and the community was “Church” for each other. She arranged liturgies and celebrations,

and the priest visited only once every few months. This proved very effective, and seemed a model from the early Church in action.

- A similar experience was recounted by others who were part of a small beachside community, visited only infrequently by a priest. The women made this community “work”.
- A woman spoke of the wonderful experience of being led on retreat days by prayerful, spiritual, faith-filled women.

## • There were many personal stories of group members who had had very negative, disheartening and even damaging experiences with their Archbishop in recent years

- Our Archbishop does not know his people and gives us no sense of being included, valued or listened to. We would like to be able to respect him, but feel little connection
- In the past our Archbishops have been more open to hearing alternative views (respectfully presented) and giving them due consideration. Surely, this is as it should be.
- A lady in our group spoke of how within the last few months, she and her husband invited three priests from overseas to have lunch with them. One priest said to them that sexual abuse in the Church was just about people wanting money and to bring the Church down. This was upsetting for [the] couple because they have personally been involved in a case of sexual abuse in the Church. These priests have obviously not been helped to understand the profound effect of this issue on the Australian Church—how can they be expected to be effective pastors.
- There were real concerns expressed that the model of Church we seem to be living in—an anachronism based on the ancient Roman Empire—is totally unsuited to the “Church in the Modern World” espoused by Vatican II.

I have met a number of Church leaders (bishops) who see their ministry as one of being Shepherd, Priest and Teacher in such an accessible, kindly and inclusive way that lay people feel inspired and strengthened by their leadership. On the other hand, I have met and worked with clerics who give the impression that they think they are ontologically different and live on a cloud of knowing everything, not feeling any need to consult, dialogue or be in close touch with the laity, the mainstream People of God, who after all make up more than 98% of the Church and are in touch with the world of family life, business and society on an everyday basis and have much wisdom to share with their pastors. I have seen collaboration and inspiration bring the Gospel to life as pastors and people lived in mutual respect and collaboration to achieve great things.

Commitment is one of the biggest things I learned from a church. Growing up going to church with my Nan, she was committed to church and family, showed love every day.

This submission was created by the Pastoral Care Team of [ - ]. They selected this story—Our community of [ - ] gathered on the evening of 20 November 2018 with Archbishop [ - ] as our celebrant. The Little Company of Mary sisters, national leaders, dignitaries and Spirit of Calvary Award nominees, gathered to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the laying of the Calvary [ - ] Foundation stone in 1938 and the annual Mary Potter Celebration. Sr [ - ] and Sr [ - ] were invited to cut the cake to acknowledge the living heritage of Calvary [ - ] which continues today. Sr [ - ] spoke movingly recalling the 20

sisters working on the wards in the 1950s: "in those days the sisters of the Little Company put into daily action the words of Mary Potter in care for the sick and vulnerable. Today you who we call the greater company continue our work and we hear the words of Mary Potter on your lips".

My experience of loving God has come in spite of the Church and not because of it.....I attend Mass usually twice a week. I spend a lot of time reading Contemplative literature and I hear a lot of people say they wish they could enjoy a spiritual practice without all the Church dogmas.....many Catholics who are divorced or gay would go back to their faith if there was the availability of relationship with God without having to deal with outdated irrelevant Church rules.....as St Therese said "Christ has no body now but ours" how can we ,as Catholics be Christ's body on Earth and make the Church an open welcoming place for people who are searching.

I am a cradle Catholic, still practising, and my Catholic faith has informed the way I live my life—it has shaped my ethical and, moral perspectives, political concerns, and mostly importantly, my spirituality and relationship with God.

I was brought up under Communism with the secret police and informers everywhere. As a child, I lived with the constant fear that a careless word from me might cost my parents their lives. During the same sex marriage debate, I experienced the same gut-wrenching fear. All the "good Catholics" around me voiced such opinions as "marriage is for Adam and Eve, not for Adam and Steve"—and with that they felt that they exhausted the topic! I felt their coldness and mistrust; I was not considered a reliable Catholic. In their eyes, I failed orthodoxy 1:01. I thought that if the Church wanted to occupy the high moral ground, it should have opened up avenues for genuine, informed debate. The orthodox position was made quite clear, which was fine, but where was the forum for the reasoned opposing voice? It was a horrid time for me, and didnt have to be like that.

I have grown up Catholic. I've attended church every weekend with my mum and older sisters and as they got older and were encouraged to make their own decisions, I just went with my mum. I was sent to a Catholic Primary School, and then on to a Catholic Secondary College. I noticed as it became rarer and rarer to be a Catholic pupil attending a Catholic school in Australia. As the only Catholic to go to church on the weekend in my year levels. I have felt like an outsider at a Catholic school because I was just that, Catholic. Yet as a 19 year old, nearing 20, I feel as confident in my faith as I ever have. I have never felt embarrassed for what I believe in, I've never felt ashamed. In my life and in my faith, it comes back to family. It comes back to those Sunday mornings sat next to my mother at church listening to the gospel, surrounded by others doing the same with there families. I think it will always come back to that. In bad times, my faith has got me through. I believe in it and I am confident in the future because of it.

As we have been invited to include personal experiences in our submissions to the Plenary Council, I wish to add mine in connection to my concerns to the ABSENCE OF COMPASSION.

I am 84 years old , grew up in Sydney and firstly wish to acknowledge how much my faith that I inherited and was taught to me has sustained me particularly through difficult times. BUT TIMES DO NOT STAY THE SAME.

Congregations have diminished, parishes have been merging and churches closing well



before the Royal Commission. It is significant that not only the young but also the not so young have been part of this exodus from the Church.

There has been no active and needed interest from Church leadership in wanting to listen and know the reasons for these developments from those who have left.

Where there is COMPASSION action follows and so far, there remains this disconnect and blame is placed in the direction of secularism, contemporary pressures and the media.

There is an ABSENCE OF COMPASSION, which has been part of Church culture past and present.

I will provide examples of the above as I look back at significant events in my life.

At the age of twelve, my father committed suicide on Christmas morning. At that time we were taught a hard merciless doctrine that those who committed suicide had no hope of salvation. For the next few years I had difficulty accepting this and one Saturday evening decided to go to confession at [ - ] church [ - ].

I spoke to the priest about the heaviness I felt. We did not talk long because when he said ' GOD IS NOT LIKE THAT ' I immediately felt an understanding and a lightness. I was witness to COMPASSION without fear and without DOCTRINAL CONSTRICTION.

Some years later in 1970, our twelve-year-old daughter died as a result of a traffic accident. In the church just before the funeral Mass I noticed the priest in the sanctuary putting on his black vestments. This practice had faded out after Vatican 2. I Spoke to him 'Please Father, she is a child.' His answer was 'She is twelve and I will treat her as an adult.'

At the end of Mass, the prayers around the coffin included several references to Satan. When we came out of the Church, he said that he included some special indulgence. (I never accepted the concept of indulgences).

I looked across the crowd gathered in front of the church. Standing next to his motorbike in the background, I saw the young priest who spoke with us in RPA Hospital when our daughter died. Amidst all that was happening, just his presence was of comfort to me and was witness to COMPASSION. I sometimes think whether he stayed in the priesthood because we lost many who had that wonderful spiritual energy.

Although we have moved on and changed from the above practices with a better understanding the ABSENCE OF COMPASSION is ever present in our Church culture. THIS HAS BEEN SO EVIDENCED IN THE ROYAL COMMISSION. Over the top doctrinal legalism and unhelpful trappings and stilted archaic liturgy are obstacles to compassion. Christ's message was simple and he conveyed it with simplicity and accessible to all. Please do not keep on repeating the same mistakes and keeping the Church in a dysfunctional time warp. God is asking for compassion to underpin and flow unabated throughout all deliberations of the Plenary Council. It is absolutely fundamental.

Have had a struggle being a divorced person in a new relationship and remaining in the Church. For too long the Church has been turning people away for not being worthy and wonders why numbers are declining.

- As a young woman, I experienced the passion, enthusiasm and joy of the renewal, which flowed from the Second Vatican Council. In our diocese we were privileged to have Archbishop [ - ] who came back from each session of the Council and called together various groups of lay, religious and clergy to share with us the fruits of the work of the

Council. As a result, we came to understand and embrace the teachings of the Council. For the first time we experienced the celebration of the liturgy in our own language and we were able to participate fully in the Mass. There was a real excitement about being Catholic at that time. The involvement of the people in all aspects of Church life was encouraged and accepted. Commissions for Liturgy, Social Justice and Peace, Ecumenism, Social Welfare and Education were appointed and swung into action. A Diocesan Pastoral Council chaired by the Archbishop became very active and Parish Pastoral Councils began. The gifts of all were encouraged and valued. A Pastoral and Spirituality Centre was established and a programme for the formation of lay spiritual directors was given the blessing of the Archbishop.

- Later experiences of working with Archbishops [ - ] and [ - ] were very collaborative in nature. Both men believed in the giftedness of all and respected the integrity and capacity of those with whom they worked. Solid programmes of faith education and formation of the lay people were established under their leadership.

- One of the excellent processes which took place under Archbishop [ - ]'s leadership was "Call to Change". The underlying premise was that if there were a change of heart (in us all) there would, of necessity, be a change in the way we operated as a diocese. As a result, there was a comprehensive process of consultation across the Diocese about how best to provide for the sacramental and pastoral needs of all. This challenged us to look beyond our own selfish interests and to ensure that all areas, rural and urban were catered for according to their needs. We were listened to, people were challenged to become more involved and our combined wisdom contributed to the final restructuring of parishes and ministries.

I feel privileged and blessed to have lived in the Archdiocese of [ - ] during and since VATICAN II. Having been a participant in the many sessions that Archbishop [ - ] conducted, on his return from Rome, to share with us the wisdom that had emerged from the discussions that had taken place there. We were shown that we are the Body of Christ and were encouraged to take up our calling to live that responsibility in our world today. We were taught that it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God whom we are called to follow, not hierarchical Church imitating monarchical governments. I have been saddened that the Church in Australia does not seem, in many instances to have moved forward to that challenge. A priest who had been ordained for five years has been appointed to the [ - ] Parish in [ - ]. In his church bulletin he writes, "seeing as the Archbishop knew me from seminary days he thought to ask me if I would come to Tasmania to be a parish priest in the [ - ], so I find myself called on a new mission here in [ - ] and [ - ]!" My mission is to make this Tasman Isle an Island of saints. If it could be done in Ireland, it can be done here!" Understandably, the people have been upset because they were not consulted and the changes he is making, e.g. having Latin Masses are not the way to help them see that they are the Body of Christ. Recently I read an article by Anian Christoph Wimmer, a CNA reporter, who had interviewed Archbishop [ - ]. It was entitled "CHASING THE DEVIL FROM TASMANIA". He likened the Archbishop to "a skilled gardener who has devoted himself to helping Catholic life in the fertile—though many say, spiritually barren soil of the island that is his diocese." In my opinion it was an insult to all of our former bishops, our priests, religious and laity who had listened to Vatican II and implemented many of its calls to build up the community which is the Church—THE BODY OF CHRIST. I was so

appalled, angry and saddened that I wrote to our Archbishop to tell him how I felt. I guess we have to speak and let our leaders know how we are affected by their leadership.

Yes, my faith has sustained me through good days and bad days, sickness and health not as a crutch but as a badge of honour. Thank you.

I was raised in a Catholic family and attended a Catholic school for my entire education. I have also completed post-graduate studies at the Australian Catholic University. For many years in my 20s and 30s, I rejected the Catholic Church as a place of hypocrisy. I still have many issues around the male domination, the grand wealth and judgement that I feel for holding differing views from many Australian bishops. I have however found meaning and relevant in Gods love and Jesus teaching through my work in a small Catholic school. This school is welcoming to all. We work hard to support our families. We want them to know that they are valued and that we care about them. We worked hard to teach our students about the positive love that is God. Yes, we teach through religious education lessons and taking students to Mass, but most importantly, we teach through our actions. Every day I see the spirit of Jesus in the way our staff genuinely care for each other, our students and our families. This is the true of Jesus and this is what has lead me back to Jesus. I have developed a far more mature and deeper knowledge of theology over the past ten years or so. I feel that my childhood religious education left me with a childlike understanding of God. I now find God in everyday people and it the beautiful creation around me. This has strengthened my faith in God and Jesus, but not faith in the institution of the Church. I am so hopeful with Pope Francis leading the Church. He lives by example. He does not reject those on the margins of society. I believe in his example and try to be like him in my work and my everyday life.

Attending church was a routine with no true meaning. Prayer was words that were spoken but not understood. Now after having a deep encounter with God through the Holy Spirit, church is an intimate time with the Lord to celebration his salvation, to receive his body and blood and be blessed with his graces. Prayer is a time to listen and speak with the Lord. Words have new meaning and are powerful. Understanding Gods love and that he loves me is amazing. I am truly grateful.

I have been truly moved by the ways in which the people of our parish have engaged together in the process of sharing and listening, and have witnessed time and again, the grief and loss that the people of God have experienced, as a direct result of the abuse, the cover-ups and enabling of paedophilia. The grief and loss of the faithful has not been acknowledged or addressed by the clergy. I know of women who have had to make the very difficult decision to leave the Catholic Church and embrace a different Christian denomination, so that they could fulfil their calling to the priesthood. For many years I was not able to receive communion because I was divorced and then in a "civil" marriage. None of my children now practise their faith, and two of them have stated that they have lost their faith. This is a deep sadness for me, and is directly related to the inequality, the clericalism, including all the pomp and ceremony that go with it, the Churchs failure to protect children and the lack of inclusion. The Church has failed them and many others, and they believe that the Church will not change or address the issues that have led to their loss of faith.

I have lived in the Archdiocese of [ - ] for the last 55 years. We were blessed to have the leadership of Archbishop [ - ] who led us through all the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. He was followed by Archbishops [ - ] and [ - ] who continued to involve all the people in all aspects of Church life: the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Liturgical celebrations, Commissions for Social Welfare, Education, Ecumenism, Justice and Peace; encouraging and respecting the gifts and talents of all. Programs of faith education, pastoral ministry, and formation of the lay people were established. Having come through these programs, many people were able to lead parishes that were without a resident priest. The “Call to Change” process under Archbishop [ - ] provided a comprehensive consultation process across the whole archdiocese. Our present Archbishop has undone many of these changes. The collaborative ministry, successful restructuring and amalgamation of some parishes, placement of Parish Sisters in priest-less parishes, consultation throughout the archdiocese, have all been discarded. When he arrived, he didn’t ask one question of his predecessor or the priests who have been serving for many years. He obviously believed we are so backward in [ - ] we need reforming! There is no obvious consultation with lay people, and he doesn’t even seem to listen to the advice of his Consultors and Council of Priests. He has brought in many priests and religious sisters from completely different cultures, and many working under pre-Vatican II ideas. Recently he has imposed on one parish a “Latin Mass” very clerical, “medieval” priest, who always dresses in black soutane and biretta and shoulder cape. This priest immediately dismissed the Special Ministers for Mass and Communion to the sick. (He might be told to reverse that if the Archbishop speaks to him). What about Pope Francis’ Joy of the Gospel and his fight against Clericalism? I’m sorry that this sounds bitter and angry, but there are many people who are so distressed they are walking away from the institutional Church. What recourse do we, the people, have?

Not a story, it would be too long but I can say I remain a Catholic but I cannot accept the teachings of the Church with respect to women, non-heterosexual people and contraception. I am waiting to be convinced that old men in purple with caps really understand the hypocrisy of the response to date to sexual abuse within the sheepfold.

- People spoke of their very positive experiences with Catholic education, and Catholic social welfare agencies.
- To address the issue of child sexual abuse within the Church, one parish held a public acknowledgement and healing ceremony. This was found to be a very powerful and meaningful experience for all involved.
- Some described the level of misunderstanding in the community about the nature of the clergy. Are they indeed a “different” species with a “secret right” not to have to submit to the law of the land? Do some of them not understand the misuse of “power over” another?

Mother [ - ]: It was during a time when I repented at the back of the Church—where I encountered God.

Br. [ - ]: 1) Immaculata Mission School—The whole thing about it. This had a major impact on me. 2) Theology on Tap, Iwitness: More specifically the encouragement to go to confession, Encounter Mass at Camperdown.

Sr. [ - ]: (1) YFC camp, (2) World Youth Day (3) ACYF: hearing Sr Hilda Scott speak about the blind man Bartameaus.

Br [ - ]: (1) Immaculata Mission School especially because going to my first one allowed me to see there were other young people who practiced and not just in the parish. (2) World Youth Day Madrid with Immaculata Community: Specifically the preparation for it where you had to commit to two hours of Eucharistic Adoration, which really helped me in my faith. (3) I learnt how to pray the Rosary in primary school—one of the teachers made a prayer space. It was the witness of my teacher because he really loved to pray, and he also gave us opportunities to go to confession at school.

Sr. [ - ]: (1) World Youth Day: More in terms of the preparation for it. We had to attend a weekly youth group, Sunday mass and a retreat. These actually had a major impact on my faith. We also had to commit to four hours of Eucharistic Adoration. This helped me truly believe that Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. (2) Disciples Summer School 2003, which helped me go deeper.

Sr. [ - ]: (1) Immaculata Mission School: Everything about it. The way there was daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and talks to form the mind. I had already been exposed to these growing up but during the baptism in the Holy Spirit night, I became more receptive to the graces that came from these things. It reawakened in me a love for God. (2)World Youth Day Madrid with the Immaculata Community: Specifically the pre-preparations as well. Committing to two hours of Adoration a week, youth group and a retreat. (3)Also the follow up after the pilgrimage through Immaculata youth group and Reachout.

Sr. [ - ]:( 1) World Youth Day Poland with Immaculata Community. (2) Immaculata Mission School (3) Immaculata Long-Term Mission School.

Sister [ - ]:( 1) Schoenstatt girls youth. (2)Immaculata Mission School.

Sr [ - ]: (1)World Youth Day Madrid: The pre-pilgrimage to the Holy Land where we spent a time of Eucharistic Adoration at the Garden of Gethsemane—I felt the peace of God. (2) Immaculata Mission School (3) Listening to Steubenville Conferences online.

Sr. [ - ]: (1) Going to Eucharistic Adoration in kindy, Visiting an orphanage. When I saw the baby crying in mum's arms, I thought, "surely God must exist, otherwise this is just cruel." (2)Immaculata Mission School 2011: I discovered that I could be loved for myself and didn't need to be anyone else. (3)World Youth Day Madrid and Krakow with the Immaculata Community: preparation for the pilgrimage required a commitment to a minimum of two hours of Adoration

I have been fortunate to have had positive experiences in my life journey as a practicing Catholic ...but I know many who have been hurt and damaged by the institution. What would Jesus say if he appeared on Earth now and saw that the schools and hospitals and aged care facilities represented as Christian organisations are only available to care for and educate those who are wealthy...it seems cruel.

I had my conversion to the Catholic faith through an encounter with religious sisters and an Adoration night.



I think that Archbishop [ - ]'s influence was highly significant in enthusing me as a young person. I went to the seminary and studied in Rome but was never ordained.

My family belonged to a small church community where our children participated in various ways in the Mass and in other church activities. They felt connected and welcomed. When we moved to a larger church centre, they were ignored and very soon stopped going to Mass. My husband is not Catholic and resisted my weekly Mass attendance in the early years of our marriage. Eventually, however, he encouraged me to have the children baptised and supported us in our practice of the faith. While not Catholic, his Christianity shone in the way he taught our children to be good people. As a teacher, I have often been struck by the willingness of those who are not Catholic to learn about Jesus Christ and the Christian way of life, which is also reflected in their higher than proportionate participation in youth groups. Once they leave school, however, there is a void. Kids have "radar" for authenticity. They will reject not only the person who is hypocritical but the faith they represent. We have a music centre in our College where we encourage students to join staff for lunch. Some days we have 30-40 students sharing not only lunch with the music staff but connecting with each other, breaking down barriers and building relationship. It is a great metaphor for "breaking bread together". We, also, started a music ministry group for the purposes of supporting College Masses, which was at first poorly attended, but once we included songs that had a faith message, though not religious, the numbers grew and at times now, we have up to 40 students. Again, it has built connection and faith. A former student of our Catholic College now studies in [ - ], where she is a youth leader in a Christian denomination, not Catholic, that has over 400 young people involved in youth groups praying and singing together, studying scripture and socialising. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church has lost two generations, at least, of young people because of the Church's obsession with sex and contraception, while some of its clergy have been perpetrating the most appalling sexual abuse and cover-ups. Our kids know hypocrisy when they see it! I remember with great fondness when I was young, Sister [ - ]'s beautiful and very detailed explanation of the Mass. Decades later the Mass still nurtures and strengthens me. My daughter and grandchildren often travel to stay with us and over the years, the girls made their first communion in our parish, because they were not connected to a parish in the town in which they lived. When it came to our grandson making his first communion, the priest refused. Joshua is in grade 10 now and has never made his First Communion. We have had Catholic youth groups in our College, which have built faith, leadership, community service and social justice understanding. Inevitably, staff have become exhausted and the programs have faded. Perhaps, we need dedicated people who are paid to assist schools in this work.

A couple holding hands during the Good Friday liturgy were reprimanded by our priest; however, he was a very pastoral man in other ways. Coming himself from a poor background he would make sure people who couldn't afford school fees were cared for. His personal life style was humble and, although he terrified children, and was very clerical from the pulpit, he could be kind. Sometimes he would go across to the pub after Mass for a meal. He once defended a child who had been reprimanded by a parishioner. He was soft on the inside but lacked the friendship and support we need in life. My father loved our parish priest in the 1950's because he worked among the men during working bees and would join them in the pub for a drink afterwards. He was well known to be a



man of the people and was widely loved. I catered for an Ordination celebration once and there was a special seat reserved for Father with people flocking around him. It would have been better if he had mingled with the people rather than be set apart. Priests should be seen to be pastoral, down among the people. Our Archbishop gets bad press. One of the local principals went to Rome on a pilgrimage led by the Archbishop and had a great time. It would be good to hear more about that. I have often written letters to politicians or bishops respectfully raising questions. This is not 'Bishop bashing'. We have the power to speak up, and we are obliged by our Baptism to do so if we are aware of injustice or abuse of power in our Church. I had the experience of abuse at the hands of a local priest when I was young, and I went to the Archbishop of the time who said to me, 'How dare you speak about the priest like that!' A later bishop I spoke to about this was more understanding but did nothing to take action.

On television, we witnessed an 18-year-old student at [ - ] College sharing that he is gay with the student and staff body at a college assembly. He appeared with his family and boyfriend on the ABC 7.30 program; sharing the acceptance, relief and love he has been shown in being able to be 'his real self'. I met a trans-gender person in our local library who told me she had been bullied at a Catholic school on account of her identity and was told by a priest that she was an 'abomination'. Once a child came to Mass without shoes and this was remarked upon very negatively by a member of the congregation after Mass. Similarly, a young man was criticized for wearing a shirt with an inappropriate logo. A priest told me a story about celebrating Mass some years ago in an American Parish. During Mass, he became aware that outside the Church there were many homeless and street people making a noise. He said that he had felt he should have been celebrating the Eucharist outside among them instead of inside among the 'faithful'. I recall the story of an old parish priest who asked his young curate one day to say Mass for him, and then asked afterwards how it went. The young priest replied that it went very well until the local 'scarlet woman' came up for Communion. "How did you respond?" asked the parish priest. The younger man said, "I acted the way Jesus would have". His parish priest groaned and retorted, "Oh, no; you didn't, did you?" A Catholic grandmother refused to attend the wedding of her granddaughter because it was being held in the Church of a different Christian denomination. Her action caused great grief and misunderstanding. A young woman carrying a child with very extreme disabilities sought an abortion at a Catholic hospital and was told she could not be helped there. She received no pastoral care or support and was told she needed to go to another hospital. A lesbian woman was refused Communion at a parish Mass. A parishioner told how a former parish priest made a point of inviting visitors to his Mass, whether Catholic or not, to receive Communion if they wished, and this had 'done great good' for those people. A parishioner shared how she had been married nearly fifty years ago with Nuptial Mass at which her husband was excluded from Communion. He has never forgotten and has remained very bitter about the Church. A parishioner shared having read a story told by one of our bishops about his visit to a seminary in Canada. There was a set of steps in the seminary Church building, each of which symbolised the steps UPWARD before Ordination to the Priesthood (the stages of Lector, Acolyte, Deacon etc.). The Bishop said he considered this a very unhelpful symbol because it perpetuated the 'separateness' of the clergy from the rest of the baptised People of God.

On a number of occasions, I have attended the Ordination of a Deacon or Priest and the consecration of a Bishop. The presence of a lengthy stream of men only, robed in full liturgical dress processing in and out of the church, and not a woman in sight on the altar during the ceremony, has really distressed and angered me. The sheer injustice and stupidity of these situations remaining the norm in the Church beggars belief and is an absolute insult to women. I know a number of women who believe they have been called by God to serve as priests. Once, just to test the waters really, I phoned the seminary in Sydney to ask what steps my daughter needed to take to be received for training for the priesthood. The woman who answered the phone was simply speechless that anyone should make such an inquiry. 'Oh, we don't have women here; we never have', she replied. I asked, 'Really! Why ever not? I know a few wonderful women who would make good priests.' She replied, 'It's just the way it is. I'm afraid we can't help you'. I have worked in Catholic organisations all my life in various positions of leadership. I have met clerics who have whole-heartedly welcomed the contribution of women at every opportunity and treated them as equals humanly and professionally. However, I regret to say only a small minority were prepared to actively promote full participation of women as priests, deacons or bishops, even though quite a few stated privately they believe that is God's will. They are too afraid for their own positions. I think if they all stood up with a united voice, the Church could not silence them.

We were taught to accept the authority of the priest. When he visited our school, all had to stand when he entered the room, we were not allowed to address him directly, and we had to keep our heads bowed. We were taught to see priests as "higher than"—they were on a pedestal, and we had to do what the priest said. He assumed authority over everybody in the church, even over decisions made by couples in the home. A priest told me that I was a hypocrite for using contraception. He never enquired about my needs or circumstances. He just laid down the law. At Mass during the collection, the priest wrote down the names of the people and how much money they gave. My grandparents were pioneers. They worked hard clearing their land for farming and were poor. They contributed what they could. The priest commented that they should keep it and let it grow a bit. We were brought up in fear of God and the Church. We were taught "hellfire and damnation" both at school and in the priest's homilies. I had a meat meal on a Thursday night. I mustn't have cleaned my teeth properly. The next day, Friday, I picked a tiny piece of meat from my tooth and swallowed it. I was so worried I would go to hell, because I had eaten meat on a Friday. When I was a kid, I stayed at a friend's place. They lived in the country and there was no Mass on that Sunday. I was convinced I had committed a mortal sin because I missed Mass, and if I died before going to confession, I would go to hell. The nuns used to ask on Mondays—"Who went to Mass yesterday?" We were taught to be fearful of both the Church and God. I knew a mother whose baby was ill. She asked the priest to call and baptise her child, he refused. Some homosexual active members of the Church community now find it homophobic and feel there is no place for them. "God doesn't make trash". The guiding principle should be that the Holy Spirit dwells in all people and there should be acceptance of all. A music ministry has been started at the college. It was billed in a low-key way "if you are interested, come along". It has snowballed, with students from all backgrounds participating, and loving it. All are welcome and accepted, they come along because it is a supportive, accepting place to be,

and now the music ministry is established. A Deanery network was established with each parish sending representatives. We would meet and share experiences and ideas. We learnt from each other and were encouraged and supported. Early in Archbishop [ - ]'s reign, he came to our North-West meeting and made it clear he would not be encouraging Deanery networks to continue. That was the last meeting of our Deanery.

The reason my son does not go to church is that his mate was sexually abused as a student. The journalist, [ - ], wrote an article in The Age newspaper a few years ago about his experience as a boarder at our College. He was a prefect at the time when a young boy came to him one night very upset because he had been sexually abused. A complaint was made, and the priest was immediately moved interstate. 30 years later [ - ] testified in court and the priest was sent to gaol. I know someone who was sexually abused by a priest. The religious order did not acknowledge what had occurred because the abuser had died before the complaint was made. It left the victim feeling distressed and let down by the Church they loved. We have lost so much because of the sexual abuse scandal, the physical and mental abuse perpetrated by clergy, and other behaviours by clergy that are far from Godly. The loss of so many faithful from our Church communities has never been acknowledged for the grief it has caused those who have remained in the Church. To my knowledge, we, as the remaining parishioners have never been apologized to or acknowledged for still attending Mass and supporting the Church during these times. I was 12 years old when my father died. I attended [ - ] College, and could not have asked for better mentors than the five Christian Brothers at the time. But I was also physically abused by them. I was strapped every day for every spelling mistake I made. We are asked to contribute financially to the Church, which is fine, and as we should, yet we are told so often that the Church has no money! It is well known that the Catholic Church is one of the wealthiest institutions on earth. This is an issue that makes the average person feel like they are "being fed Mushroom dust." As a very young married couple, we felt we were too young to start a family, so we asked our local priest if there was someone in the Church we could talk to about this. He said no, that we should practice abstinence! This was so ridiculously unrealistic, and unjust of him to treat us with such disdain about such an important issue.

While I have no personal experience of sexual abuse by Church personnel, I find the stories of others, so very many of them, to be utterly heartrending. Change must happen now, not just policies and procedures to protect people but fundamental change to the power structures to bring our Church into the 21st century with distributive leadership, open to both men and women. Our parish priest is a model for the "shepherd" needed in our parishes. He is humble, shares leadership, listens and proclaims the gospel message in word and action. There are many men and women who have a calling to priestly service, whether married, single or in same sex relationships. Let us galvanise their love of the Church to help take us forward to be the Church that Jesus called us to be.

I have witnessed pain and joy as a member of the Catholic Church Family. I would hesitate to accept the statement that the Church has shaped me and I am grateful that it hasnt and that I am able to think for myself without blindly accepting and being told what to do, how to live etc. I am also grateful that I see the positive and negative aspects of the Church and still choose to be a member of its family. Generally as a laywoman, I feel the

Church does not value me or any contributions I make in the same way as it would if I were male. I am not alone in feeling that sentiment.
Seasonal workers from [ - ] and the [ - ] Islands come to [ - ] to pick berry fruit for six months each year. These seasonal workers have to adapt to life in a different country with a different culture, a different climate and a different language. They are also separated from their families for half of the year. Most of the money that the fruit pickers earn is sent home to support their families. The [ - ] Catholic Parish has been reaching out to the seasonal fruit pickers from the overseas countries. The parishioners organise a welcoming function for the overseas workers shortly after their arrival. The parishioners also provide a meal after the Sunday evening Mass to share with the overseas fruit pickers.
Many young people in Australia feel disgusted about the behaviour of some of the Catholic Church clergy in the past. Consequently, they are wary about coming back to the Church. For these young people to consider returning to the Church they will need to be convinced that the Church leadership has changed. Young people are involved in many activities and are often time poor. They often have casual or part time jobs and are required to work evenings and weekends. New and creative ways will need to be considered so that young people can more easily have their voice heard in the Church. The Church in Australia has an aging lay membership that is increasingly less able to continue in leadership roles. It is crucial that young adults begin to fill these roles as soon as possible.
Yes, two stories really. Growing up as a child going to Mass on a Sunday and staying after church to play, talk outside or then have brunch at another parishioners house was the highlight of the week. We would hardly ever go home less than an hour after Mass finished. It was a real time of community, catching up, building awareness of what was happening in people's lives. Often these chats would result in follow up actions e.g. organize wood cutting for someone, sharing fruit or vegies, giving a lift to an appointments etc. We need to revitalize our church communities to once again be the centre of our broader communities. [In] 1983, at the age of 29, I was living with a community of religious sisters and exploring joining their community. While the congregation was centred in [ - ] they had a house and community in [ - ] in order to access Theological education opportunities. From fairly simple country life, I was sent to city-life in another state where we lived more extravagantly than I knew was possible. Upon querying this was told it was to compensate for what they had to give up! When trying to ask questions or make suggestions in relation to how we do things was told that I would not be able to participate in any Congregation planning/decision making sessions till at least taking final vows. I was appalled as any group taking in new members needs to welcome and allow these new members to be fully part of and even in small ways hopefully change and enhance the group. The Church as a whole needs to do this too!
My devotion to Mary, she is always there to help through hard times, and no doubt, she will be there during these terrible times for the Church in Australia and our trust in God.
As a boy, I helped Fr K [ - ] when he was Dean of [ - ] College, a Catholic college of the University of [ - ]. We were building a rock wall beside a driveway into the college. Fr K [ - ] insisted that I stack what were spherical rocks on top of one another with no batter on the

wall. I pointed out that in winter when the soil swelled with rain the wall would be pushed over. Fr G [ - ], the rector, was observing the wall building from above on his office balcony. He said "[Fr K], [ - ]s right." [Fr K] 's response was "What would you know?" As I understood, Fr G [ - ] was an engineer whilst Fr K [ - ] was a chartered accountant and QC. I noted then that, even with priests, ego was a more powerful force than common sense.

Music and scripture is what sustains me. The new translation of the Mass is wonderful and we need a scripture translation to match it.

I was born and raised a Catholic. I participated in the sacraments as a child and attended my local church. I went to a Catholic high school but slowly began to lose my faith. In year 10 I found my faith again when things got really difficult for my family and I became involved in youth ministry and leadership. I began volunteering with youth programs and helping children in need. Doing this returned me to God again and I grew in my love for the Church again by participating in youth groups and conferences, adoration and rosary daily. I also attended ACYF in 2017 and had the most wonderful time. I now know who God is asking me to be.

**FAITH EDUCATION** Needs to focus closely on the teachings of Jesus, unpacked in more details for adults and made child friendly for younger people, so a more gradual progression, a life-long learning for all ages. The existing frameworks of RCIA, RCIC and Adult Faith Education could be further developed to ensure this happens. This will also require training programmes for catechists to be trained in these redeveloped programmes. The ongoing formation of all in Faith Education is another area that is lacking within the Catholic Church in Australia. Local home grown programmes need to be developed for Australian conditions (e.g. unpacking the scriptures (at all levels), unpacking the Mass).

**CHURCH STRUCTURE** We are a living church in a Post-Vatican II era, we must not revert to Pre-Vatican II church. Clericalism is not suited to today's world, clergy must live among the flock and have the smell of the sheep. The Church needs to completely use Jesus as its model more fully in its treatment of its members. Less rules and regulations and more compassion. Inclusiveness is very important. A reformation of where the Church is, but still recognise all the diverse elements within but don't force these elements upon those who are not so inclined. Less Church Patriarchy is needed and a more flatter and transparent Church is required, in actions and processes.

**SACRAMENTS** A part of our response under Faith Education we stated, "Needs to focus closely on the teachings of Jesus, unpacked ... made child friendly for younger people." Our Sacraments need to allow our young people to get to know Jesus. Sacraments allow us to pass on to our younger generation these teachings, but the learning must not stop after the Sacrament is received. We need further ongoing development, which then leads to further Adult Faith Education, and a want to learn along life's journey. The order of some of the Sacraments relies upon the direction of the local bishop but must be standardised across the Catholic Church. Research the correct order and stick with the result, make the decision at the ACBC level. The administering of the Sacraments should



be reviewed, allowing for example the anointing of the sick be given by lay people or deacons, bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation.
What has shaped me is that I was, as a child, witness to various good, holy prayerful people whose lives were clearly guided by and enhanced through their belief in Jesus Christ. It was their behaviours that were the critical thing in demonstrating their beliefs. So strongly in contrast to those hypercritical individuals and groups in the spotlight these days. There were parents, nuns, brothers, priests and just good, well-behaved laypeople who showed outwardly, what they held inwardly. It was by their fruits that I knew them and it was from their example I have learned and am still a practising and joyful Catholic Christian today.
Contraception is a very troubling matter for young couples, with the Church's influence and money could not a serious investigation by medical researchers be done to pinpoint with great accuracy and simplicity a woman's fertile period. We have reached the moon; surely, this can't be rocket science.
Our response has been influenced by the strong charism of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart who were our founders. We have also been influenced by the legacy of Fr Julian-Tenison Woods who was an activist for the environment and had a deep love of God's creation.
I grew up as a cradle-Catholic in a very faithful, practising family. We prayed together as a family and all the members of the family in my generation continue to practice the faith. We are all critical thinkers and do not passively accept what is taught by the Church unless what is taught has an internal coherence which stands up to scrutiny. We were all brought up with a concern for others and a strong sense of justice, having working class parents who displayed this in their work for St Vincent de Paul and other charities and unions. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life were highly esteemed in my family. While I resisted the call for many years and lived an adventurous life around the world, in God's time I accepted the Lord's call and joined religious life and was ordained to the priesthood twenty four years ago.
I have a good group of Catholic friends who support each other in the faith and reach out to others who don't share our faith. This support has largely been through social groups, sometimes in parish life and never in school systems. I think it's sad that Catholics often have to work around the institutions in the Church for support rather than in and through them. I have had largely positive experiences regarding Sacramental support however, it rarely goes beyond this to growth in formation, catechesis, evangelisation, outreach programs or social support. And if it does, it seems to be a hollow social justice without the Gospel.
Although I grew up in a practicing Catholic family, I did not receive excellent formation on the social teachings of the faith. Although my parents were a great example of these teachings, and I knew their stance on these issues, it was never explicitly taught to me, partly because I do not believe they understood them fully themselves and came from a position of "blind faith" in the Church's teachings. As I entered my teens and became more independent in my thinking and rebellious, as I had only really received information on the Church's teaching from my parents (although I went to Mass every Sunday). I associated



the Church's teaching on gay marriage etc. with my parents, only knowing the what behind the teaching rather than the why, and decided it was simply them being ultra-old fashioned. Thus, I was pro-gay marriage and just about everything else when I was 14/15. However, when I attended a mission school, I encountered for the first time the WHY behind the Church's Teaching, rather than simply the what, and, within 10 days had completely changed my view, based on the truth that I had heard. This is why I believe catechesis MUST be offered within parishes, and schools (as the Catholic education system is no longer Catholic at all) so that the young people may know the why, rather than simply the what the Church teaches.

I strongly support the views re: the Church of Senator [ - ]. I have supported the ordination of women since I was 16. It was as obvious to me then as it is now—50 years later. At the very least, we must return to the model of the first millennium and ordain women as deacons. The Lord has answered my prayers in surprising ways—S/He loves teaching us patience. There are times when I need the quiet and inspiration of a Sunday service with the Society of Friends (Quakers). I find these Meetings refreshing and I believe Christians should choose peace making and commitment to simple living and Gods creation. In contrast, I have felt increasingly alienated as my diocese ([ - ]) has consistently become an image of the Church of the 1950s—triumphant and celebrating the values of the council of Trent. I believe Jesus would be visiting the homeless, working to save Gods creation and working for the refugees we have incarcerated on Manus Island and Nauru. The Lord continually nudges me in these directions.

As a university student, I was exposed to the works of Blessed John Henry Newman. In relation to the laity, these words of his have remained with me— I want a laity, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputation, but men [and women] who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it. The implications of achieving this are far-reaching not only spiritually, intellectually but also in the Church being present in the community living in solidarity with the poor and marginalised. Lay people could do worse than to take this as a guiding principle.

My conversion happened as a young person who for the first time in my life opened my heart to prayer and in my poverty encountered the living God—this opening of prayer, enabled me to hear the words of Christ and although I was not a Catholic I found myself prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray the Rosary. When Blaise Pascal encountered God, he simply said "FIRE" then he wrote his experience of God and sewed it in a parchment in his coat pocket and it wasn't found until he died. This famous scientist explains his experience in the following: "GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob not of the philosophers and of the learned. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace. GOD of Jesus Christ. My God and your God. Your GOD will be my God. Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except GOD. He is only found by the ways taught in the Gospel. Grandeur of the human soul. Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you. Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. I have departed from him: They have forsaken me, the fount of living water. My God, will you leave me? Let me not be separated from him forever. This is eternal life, that they know you, the one true God, and the one that you sent, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. I left him; I fled him, renounced, crucified. Let me never be

separated from him. He is only kept securely by the ways taught in the Gospel: Renunciation, total and sweet. Complete submission to Jesus Christ and to my director. Eternally in joy for a day's exercise on the earth. May I not forget your words. Amen." I found this Fire too—and it began in the simple prayer of the Rosary which his Blessed Mother gave us—not sentimental—but POWERFUL, YES for mere little Children—this prayer brought about an incredible peace and stillness and light and grace—Thankfully no one had time to teach me, so I had to learn it myself—slowly and prayerfully—mediating on each mystery taught me how to be still and also taught me about the life of Christ and the gospel. For instance, learning from the example of Our Ladys yes, when the Angel came and asked her will you be Gods instrument, and mediating on the other mysteries of Christs life in the scriptures; from the life of His infancy all the way to His death and Resurrection. During my time of conversion, I was also told about the life of Saint Therese of Lisieux. I had never heard of a Saint and was amazed that such people existed. After reading about her life, I wanted to know about all the lives of the Saints—and their lives opened me up to the truth of the Church, including a love for the Eucharist, Confession and a love for all things Catholic—maybe we can consider some of these treasures that are sometimes forgotten, because they point the way.

I have been lucky to be brought up in a practicing Catholic family who has been engaged in their local parish communities. As a teenager and young adult, I was heavily involved with local Catholic Youth Ministry events and faith formation experiences. I attended two World Youth Day gatherings, which were high points in my faith journey. I went on to become a high school teacher in a Catholic School, where I mostly teach Religious Education. Now I am married with two young children, I find there to be a huge gap in faith formation opportunities and support. There is almost nothing available that I can access at a practical time, and hardly any events that cater to young families. It can be very isolating and frustrating. I have many friends who are part of other Christian communities who are much better supported this area. Their services have 60+ young children at them, because they are catered for with age appropriate activities. The parents are nurtured through small group arrangements, and all families are supported when in need (for example, when a family has a new baby, people in the parish provide meals though a roster for the first 6 weeks). They also run playgroups at their churches, which anyone in the surrounding local community can access for free. They provide wonderful hospitality to the parents and lovely activities for children. It is a great evangelisation opportunity. I am yet to come across a Catholic community that provides such support to young families, which is a great shame. We have a wonderful opportunity here to help families in their greatest task to raise children who love God and their neighbour.

I went to Catholic schools growing up and received all the Sacraments; I went to Mass at Christmas and Easter with my family, but this was the extent of my experience with the faith. Even though I attended Sacramental classes, I feel no one told me that Jesus was actually present in the Blessed Sacrament. In Year 11, I was chosen from my school to go to WYD Madrid with Archbishop [ - ] through the [ - ] diocese schools group. Seeing hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from around the world with such a passionate love for Jesus and their faith really shook me, as I had never seen this in Australia. I wouldnt say there were many in the group I was with who had this love for the faith and so I brushed it off as something that was lacking in us culturally —as I thought it was because

of their Catholic cultures that they so loved their faith—but I recognised there was something more; they actually knew Jesus as a person and their faith was not a set of rules, but a relationship. We went via the Holy Land where we had Eucharistic Adoration in the Garden of Gethsemane. I encountered the peace of God for the first time in my life. When I returned home, through His grace, I made a decision to go to Sunday Mass and practice the faith. I also joined a Youth Band in [ - ] where we played music at Mass every second week. This opportunity for fellowship with other young people encouraged me in practising the faith. I started to attend retreats and one in particular really led me to go deeper. A two week Mission School held in [ - ] in [ - ] was my first encounter with young Australians who really knew Jesus as a person. This really changed my life and I know its because each day started off with Eucharistic Adoration, where in His physical presence, He poured out His love on me. I am really thankful to the Sisters of the Immaculata for providing this opportunity to know Jesus as a person and also for introducing me to the Rosary. Through the Rosary, I received a grace to continue to practice the faith even when family and friends were hostile towards me because I was going to Church on Sundays and seeking to live virtue.

###My experience of the Immaculata Mission School was one of the big moments where I experienced an outpouring of Gods grace in my life. It was everything about the school — the way there was daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, living in a community that wanted to love and be saints, and talks to form the mind. One particular highlight for me in my first mission school was the baptism of the Holy Spirit night. This experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was like a topping to my cake. I had already been exposed to the sacraments, adoration, some devotions like the rosary and the Divine Mercy in my family life but it was during the baptism in the Holy Spirit night that I had an encounter of Gods personal love for me, which changed me and propelled me in the spiritual life. The faith was no longer cultural (being of Filipino background) or a belief that I thought was the truth but remained only in my head and not in my heart. Jesus Christ suddenly became so real to me and the words "God loves you" suddenly sunk deep in me that I actually believed it. I felt the tangible love of God so much that I was set on fire. I also noticed that I became more receptive to the sacraments and gave me a greater desire for them. It reawakened in me a love for God and the Catholic Church. World Youth Day Madrid with the Immaculata Community: Specifically the pre-preparations where we had to commit to prayer of two hours of adoration a week, daily rosary, weekly youth group and a spiritual retreat. Also the follow up after the pilgrimage through Immaculata youth group and Reachouts where there was access to adoration, the sacraments. The Reachouts were especially monthly events where as young people, we get to serve the community and evangelise.

The first thing I want to share is about the time I went to my first Immaculata Mission School when I was fourteen years old. I realised the meaning of being an "authentic" Christian witness. I was so used to hearing the word "be authentic" "be genuine" witnesses and I understood this in my head, but I dont think it sunk in my heart. When I met the community they loved Jesus and Mary with such great love but the reason I really knew this, was not because of the times I watched them spend time in the Chapel adoring Jesus, or the way they knew how to lead us in praying the Rosary, but by the way they

really loved each person as if they were the only one in the world. My best friend who was agnostic came to one of the mission schools later, said to me: "They really listened to me, not just talked to me and "heard" me but really listened to me." He felt very loved and this opened him up to God. I also saw the way they stressed not to slander, have negative humour and challenged us young people not to have exclusive relationships in the retreat so that everyone is loved, and the scariest part was that they really meant the part in the gospel, which says "if you have a problem with your brother, go and talk to them." I really didnt know what having a virtue friendship was till I went to them. They challenged us to not just about how shallow trends of the world are but to authentically live it our own lives. Not to be so caught up with trends, images, fashion and not to be addicted to social media, television etc. To substitute this for a prayer life! I also want to share about the importance that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in shaping my faith. To be honest, this was soooo uncomfortable. I didnt mind praise and worship (singing it and listening to it) but to have your hands raised up and full expression of your love for God was so challenging to me. It was then I realised I was really not free-I cared too much about what people thought and not what God thought. The gospel asks us to worship in "spirit and truth" and not how people say you should do it "externally." Also it helped me see that its about being faithful to what the Spirit is prompting you to do or say and not be afraid of what man thinks. In addition, I have witnessed people (including myself) encounter and being touched personally by God and lives have been changed.

I started attending the traditional Latin Mass when it was available and it was the best experience of my life, we need this to be in every diocese and we should promote tradition rather than modernism.

I had a profound experience of Jesus Christ through Eucharistic Adoration. As I sat before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I noticed the walls in my heart start to come down. The more time I spent with Jesus, the more I found myself asking Who do you say I am? Slowly, God started to reveal to me my identity as a child of God. Again, slowly, I began to walk in His healing love. At the time, I was serving as a missionary, so this revelation really helped me to realise that God calls each of us to be wounded healers so that we can transform the world with His love, therefore the mission of the Church begins in Adoration.

I have had two very different experiences of the Church in Australia in two states. The first experience was enough to almost make me walk away and not enter a church again. On approaching a priest concerning the baptism of my son, he inquired as to my marital status. On learning that I was divorced, he told me I couldnt receive the Eucharist. Period. No inquiry into the why or wherefore, just an assumption. I was dismayed by his rigidity and disappointed with his arrogance. I felt disrespected and afterwards I was raging. Our son was baptised, just elsewhere. The second experience was completely opposite. A casual chat with the parish priest led to a telling of my story, an invitation to the church, and an offer to investigate the possibility of an annulment (there are definite grounds). I was treated as an individual and listened to with empathy and understanding. I felt as though I mattered and that I mattered more than rigid rules, that there had to be a realistic approach in dealing with modern problems. Since then, I have been a regular Mass-goer, and have been welcomed with open arms by parishioners. It has been a very positive experience for someone who was brought up in a very strict Catholic household and who

was disenchanted by the Church in general, but someone who also lingered on the sidelines wanting to be part of the team.

I was a member of a vibrant, evangelical Anglican parish that was a very strong and close-knit community. When I encountered Catholicism, I was drawn by the sacramentality, depth of theology and the Church's embodiment of the unity of the Pauline one body of many parts. Since being received into the Church and having children, I have found it impossible to experience the same sense of belonging, that concrete experience of God's love for me, in the Church. Lacking that experience, I have kept my faith only because I have had nowhere else to go—I had encountered the words of life (John 6:66-68). This drought was recently broken by World Youth day where I had the chance to go on pilgrimage with other young Catholics. The experience was like an abundant dump of rain finally penetrating through the parched and hardened soil to again invigorate deep-set roots. But for me to go my wife had to make a lot of sacrifices, looking after our two young daughters on her own and it was very arduous for her. I would like to see our parish and others in Australia become these oases of life. Places where we are all watered by the joy of fellowship with other Catholics.

I have been embarrassed many times at Catholic Masses and especially funerals when it is made quite clear that non-Catholics are not welcome (they see it as not worthy) to receive Holy Communion. It has caused great hurt to many good people whom I know.

##I am still haunted by childhood Confessions, even though no priest was ever unkind or harsh. Once when I told the priest I had no sin to confess, he came up with a number of possibilities such as disobedience and a raft of other normal childhood behaviours so I agreed to them so I could get out of there. After that I used to make up a list of sins so that I would be believed. I was too unliberated to withdraw my children from this program because I really wanted them to experience the wonder of the Eucharist. I now ache to think that a beautiful, soon to be 9 year old grand-daughter may be subjected to this process and I worry about the effect it will have on her tender little heart. Stop this abuse of children. Adults are no longer flocking to the confessional because they have worked out it is not a good idea—why are we doing it to innocent children?

When I was 18, I began an arts degree at Sydney Uni. I had already been searching the Catholic faith but did not practice it and never went to Mass, as I was not raised with this. I began to go to talks on the faith and a bible study, and these really made me begin to see the truth of the Catholic faith. However, it was not until I had a couple of deep sacramental encounters that I really met the person of Jesus. I went to confession for the first time since childhood and this lifted off a great weight of guilt. After this, I had a freedom to really come closer to God—I was given a penance in confession to come before the Blessed Sacrament and I went in to an "Adoration tent" that was set up on campus for a mission week. Part of the penance was to have a good time kneeling down, and I was reluctant to do this on the lawn, but when I saw the witness of another young woman who came in and knelt in the damp ground, totally focused on Christ in the Eucharist, I was convicted. I knelt down and truly encountered Jesus in that place—I met him there and ended up staying for over an hour—after this I had a desire to be confirmed. After my confirmation, I did a youth leaders course and this completely changed my life, as it was my first experience of daily Mass and adoration. It was prayer that transformed my life,



and now I go to Mass daily and pray the Rosary and adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament every day. I have seen many people transformed and healed through prayer—spiritually, emotionally, and even physically. This experience of being able to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist has shaped my life radically, and has given me a zeal to promote prayer and adoration to others, as I know it transforms, as it brings people to Jesus—and then he can do the rest—he can bring the healing and conversion and faith.

I sincerely thank our bishops for holding this plenary council. I pray that God gives us all the wisdom to know His will and the courage to do His will. I am an 81-year-old man and I am a committed and conventional Catholic. I hope to see women take their rightful place within the Church before I die. At the present, the Church's treatment of women is a scandal to the rest of the world.

My faith remains strong because of my parents living out their faith in their daily lives and the Parish priest I knew for the early years of my life, Fr [ - ]. This man was loved by all people in the area I grew up in. Catholic, Protestant, atheist, agnostic and those who had no idea who God was. This priest was described by his Archbishop, [ - ], as a man with no guile. How true that was. Many people in the hard economic times of the 40s and 50s had food on their table and their children received an education because of this wonderful man. This man, as Pope Francis says, "truly smelt of the sheep" When I spent four years at a Marist boarding school I found clerical arrogance and abuse. Physical, mental and sexual and saw so many young boys have their faith destroyed by a totally indifferent regime. Out of a class of 42 I am, as far as I know, the only one who retained my faith in the Church and God. A fellow student remarked to me one time that Marist College produced two priests and two thousand men with alcohol issues. A slight exaggeration but with serious element of truth.

As per attached pdf, when there is a significant church service or an important liturgical ceremony, RESERVED SEATS pop up to confirm, the lowly, secluded, are kept away, while the powerful, pretty and wealthy get always the best places in society. Furthermore, that a population of over 25 million are also left with no readily available to the commoner plebs Cardinal that matters, additionally corroborates that the bygone era Vatican City is a bully maladministration, power distant and that also preys on the elderly to take on more roles, but would not care less to even appoint swiftly a new Archbishop for the city of Adelaide. How shamelessly callous. If this Papacy would be compliant with the Word of God, each Australian Capital City would have had by now, not only one Cardinal, but many, one for each area of life, so that, if a lowly or a powerful would need to immediately see in person a clergy figure that matters, they would be given the dignity and respect to not only be heard, but also have their legitimate social and financial justice delivered by whom else it may concern as an inalienable, inviolable and essential human right. Namely, the dignity of a stable and permanent employment position, the decency of a partner and the necessity of a peaceful and joyful house where to live. Instead, the blatant workplace culture of sending the individual around in bureaucratic circles is the common malpractice as clergy put their needs and schedule first, while placing the needy and left behind out of the door of their lavish retreats and claim a social justice statement on homelessness 2019? How hypocritical and despicable.



I grew up in the Church of England until I was 12. I met and married my wife overseas and moved to Australia as a non-believing Christian. It is through my wife and meeting possibly the two most influential truly Catholic people that I was able to regain my faith and have it develop to the point it is now. I find it very hard as a new Catholic to accept those who reject the faith and its teachings. From coming from a place where I had no real set parameters other than my conscience to the teachings of Christ. I find it sad that there are those in the Church who want to turn their backs on Christ and adopt this modern attitude of let your conscience be your guide. Also their twisting of the teachings to the What do you think about that? Instead of this is the faith we profess that has been handed down unchanged for the last 2000 years.

World Youth Day has been a huge part of my faith formation and has contributed greatly in shaping me. This experience allowed me to be part of something so much greater than I could imagine. It connected me to the Universal Church and gave me a sense of belonging that is just not available to a young person sitting in a parish on a Sunday. The sheer magnitude of an experience of World Youth Day provides the vehicle for this significant faith formation, but it is the people that make the difference. Priests and lay leaders who are well formed and balanced. Able to relate well to people in their everyday life, not pontificate from above. These priests and lay leaders in my life have made all the difference to my faith formation and strengthening of my faith and sense of belonging and worth in the Church.

For reasons I still don't quite know, in late 2010, I decided to abandon my holiday plans and attend the Immaculata Mission School 2011—it was truly an action of the Holy Spirit. The Mission School featured numerous talks, which were kerygmatic, and formative, daily Mass and extensive times of Eucharistic Adoration, Charismatic prayer and "Baptism in the Holy Spirit", formation in devotions, praise and worship, share groups, as well as fun and social activities. Two major things struck me about this retreat. Firstly, the genuine love I experienced from my peers on the retreat (compared with the fairly conditional love I experienced from my friends in High School). Secondly, while I did not experience any particular moment of conversion, I came away from the retreat a different person: I was on fire for the Catholic faith, I began frequenting the Sacraments and daily Mass, I began to develop a distaste for sinful things. I can mark this as the key moment of my "conversion" to desiring to live the Catholic faith to the full, and my life has not been the same since.

I believe my faith in the Catholic Church has remained and grown in me as I have developed as a person. Born as an only child into a Catholic family meant that I was always surrounded by faithful people. However, my belief in God and development in faith grew during my involvement in the music ministry of the parish. Being welcomed and surrounded by like-minded people who were always supportive and positive helped greatly in my faith development, as did regular workshops in choosing music and music's role in the Church (learning about my faith). I would strongly suggest that sacramental children are perhaps inducted into ministries within their parish to help get them involved and find a place where they belong. This will allow them not only to remain at church once the sacramental program concludes but also to gain a deeper understanding of their faith. This is so important if we as a Church wish to grow!

I have been completely shaped by my experience of conversion, through WYD and YLFC. I was raised Catholic and my family never missed Mass but we also never prayed as a family and I didn't have any personal relationship with God. I did not practise the faith for six years, after finishing high school, and considered myself spiritual but not religious. I saw the Church merely as an institution that needed to change. Even though I felt this way, I went to WYD in Sydney on a whim, as a volunteer, and during a catechesis session, there I went to confession for the first time in many years, more out of curiosity than anything. It didn't seem important to me nor did I feel any spiritual effect of the confession. It was followed immediately by Mass, which I attended, but wasn't really interested in (for example, I sent a text message at one point in the Mass). When I received communion, however, I encountered Christ in an extremely close and powerful way. This encounter really shook me, but I didn't know what to do about it. I returned home and continued my life, but I felt a new openness to thinking about God. A few months later a uni friend who had also attended WYD sent me a flyer for the Youth Leaders Formation Course in Sydney but I saw that it contained daily Mass, classes, evangelisation etc. and thought, "not for me", as I still didn't consider myself Catholic. But again, on a whim, I decided to apply and I went. On the YLFC, something touched me enough in the first few days to go to confession again, and this time to take it seriously. That evening Bishop [ - ] came to speak and I only remember his first words—quoting Ephesians 1:4—because as I heard those words I felt the love of the Father pouring over me. I remember knowing, "God made me because He loves me and wants me to be with Him forever—this sort of love is so incredible that I have to follow Him" and later, I thought, "why didn't anyone ever tell me this?!" Discovering the immense love of God and at the same time knowing that this had never previously been preached or explained or witnessed to me (in a whole life-time of Catholicism and 18 years of weekly Mass attendance) made me want to tell everyone this incredibly good news. Another aspect of YLFC that was significant was discovering the beautiful teachings of the Church and the richness of Truth within Her—and again, realising that I had never once met a Catholic (before my experience on YLFC) that witnessed to the richness of our faith (in my previous experience, when it came to Church teachings and liturgical life, Catholics had been either ill-formed or in disagreement with the Church—neither of which was a very compelling witness). Finally, it was the times of prayer during the YLFC (particularly a silent hour of Adoration each morning and a rosary each evening) that helped me draw closer to Christ each day and turn that first encounter into a relationship that has, by God's grace, become the centre of my life.

The Church has shaped my beliefs. I believe in God, the gospels, the sacraments. I believe the way to God is through prayer, living a just life. I do not attend church regularly as I find reading the Bible and studying scripture on my own and through online groups has brought me closer to God. I have never experienced the truth as much as I do now. It is very difficult to pass on the Catholic faith to my children as the ills of the Church are destructive and it is not offering a safe place. Distrust is now creeping in and I question my own part in the Church. The Church betrayed me and my whole core belief is shattered. The only truth is God and the Bible. How can the Church rebuild from the core up? Remove all the wealth and return to humble beginnings. Hard to write. Perhaps it's the answer.

One story I feel God is calling me to share has to do with an experience of a friend. I have a friend who goes to Sunday Mass every week, however, does not necessarily live a life centred fully on God. He had been searching for ways that he and his young family could get more involved in the Church, but found that his diocese and parish had nothing really available for them. He was then convinced by other family members to start attending a Protestant Church that was very good at fostering the type of community he was looking for. He continues to attend weekly Catholic Mass with his family, and every fortnight has decided to also worship at this other Church. What he shared with me was this: He likes almost nothing about this other Church. He genuinely dislikes the way they do liturgy, he dislikes their music, he dislikes and disagrees with some of their theology, he believes that their faith lacks substance, and he doesn't appreciate their perceived focus on earning money. Despite all this, however, he continues to go there. Why? Because that is where he has experienced genuine Christian witness and community. People who love him and are willing to go out of their way to evangelise and befriend him. He even shared a story with me about his pastor who would spend his days off with him to share a coffee and chat. He experienced genuine community and despite the fact that he likes almost nothing else about this Church, community is enough to keep him there. I think this goes to show the power that genuine community has when it comes to evangelisation and the experience of a parish that is alive. Please see attached for my own brief personal story...

When I was 12 years old, I had an experience of the presence of God and always believed in Him from that point. However, I went to a public school and no-one in my parish spoke to me about faith outside of the prayers said at Mass. My family didn't speak about faith, even, and—apart from Grace before meals—we barely prayed. So I wanted to know this God I'd experienced but wasn't being reached out to by anyone in the Church. When I was 18, I encountered non-Catholic Christians who invited me to Bible studies, church services and spoke to me about God. They were also journeying—I wasn't being singled out—but they invited me along. And I learnt and grew so much. At 18, I made a conscious decision to leave the Catholic Church because I could see my Christian friends had had faith—and knew and lived it—since they were little, and I wanted that for my future children. It was actually a hard decision, but I felt I had to leave. At that point, in my life, I hadn't met a single young Catholic who knew their faith and lived it. Several years later, I was invited to a Catholic weekend retreat in [ - ] run by the Immaculata Community (I lived in [ - ] at the time) and I went. There I was so loved, and I encountered talks on the teachings of the Catholic faith, on the Bible, on Confession—things I'd never heard before. Because no-one in my parish talked about the Eucharist, I really thought Catholics didn't believe in the Real Presence. At this retreat, I learnt that they did—and so I stopped receiving Holy Communion out of respect for that. That retreat sparked a journey of searching and learning and six months later I realised my need to go to Confession and then I decided to return to the Church (my desire to receive Holy Communion was so strong, but I'd always stopped myself receiving, as I knew I was outside of where the Church thought I should be. That desire for Holy Communion led me back into the Church, as after my confession, I knew I could receive the Eucharist, but that if I did, I would have to become Catholic again. You can't be half in and half out. I decided to receive Holy Communion and come back to the Church!) That was nearly 10 years ago, and since then I've taken up so many opportunities of formation, and learning more about my faith.

Prayer—especially Eucharistic adoration, the rosary and Mass—is so important to me, but it is a journey, and I'm still growing and have a long way to go. I'm so grateful that I was invited to that retreat, and that that retreat was being run in the first place. I'm so passionate about young people discovering Jesus in the Eucharist, getting formed in the faith and being encouraged to become saints.

Growing up in [ - ], I was fortunate to have a beautiful parish priest who was a deep man of prayer. He always encouraged the young people to read the Bible and to set up a prayer space in your room so that you can take time to pray to God. He not only talked the talk, but he also walked the walk, and he would often be seen in prayer in the early hours of the morning on his knees in Adoration, praying after the Mass he celebrated, and would always encourage the congregation to prayer after we received the Eucharist (he always managed to have up to 5 minutes of silence after the Communion song when everyone was finally seated and he finished cleaning the vessels). He also always blessed the different groups within the Church, and while being part of music ministry, I remember him always praying with us before Mass began. I really appreciated this and learnt to rely on God through his example. His example had a profound impact on my life, and led me to have an openness to faith, which eventually led me to a deepening of conversion and a stable prayer life. When I was a young teenager, a beautiful woman, who is now my Mother Superior in my community, came to our parish. She too was a woman of prayer and she taught me how to pray the Rosary and introduced me to Eucharistic Adoration. She also taught me about the saints and that we too are called to holiness because God loves us. Her example of faith and love for God was a catalyst for me to grow deeper in my relationship with God. It was also at a pivotal age when I could have easily gone astray. With the permission of the parish priest, she took a group of us to World Youth Day in Toronto Canada 2002. Although the pilgrimage was great, what really changed my life was the pre-pilgrimage formation which consisted of 4 hours of Eucharistic Adoration a week, attendance of a retreat, attendance at our weekly youth gathering and Sunday Mass. The Adoration had a profound impact on my life, and for the first time I experienced Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, and that he wanted to be my best friend. At the time, this was what I really needed as I struggled in school making good friends and also struggled feeling understood by my family. When people say that young people can't sit in Adoration for long, I have to disagree with them, because it was this sitting with God and praying before him that has changed my life. In my years as a youth leader and religious sister, I have also seen this same pattern recur. In fact, we have been running the Immaculata Mission School now for over 10 years, and we have 1 and a half hours of Adoration each morning, and each year, the young people keep coming up to me and saying that their favourite part of the school was the Adoration because this is where they encountered God's love and peace.

My own faith was greatly helped by both the discipleship of prayer groups and catechesis within the charismatic movement, and the drawing into sacredness of the liturgy & Eucharist by diocesan & Capuchin priests. I'd like to share how my professional work as a lay-missionary has changed over the years though, as a result of the need to tackle deficiencies in faith formation within schools. I've collated a document of incidents within Catholic schools that have undermined Catholic teaching. At first, I had no reason to collate the things being said that were not helping students, but as I collated more and

more a few patterns emerged. What now stands out is that inclusiveness in liturgies is presented as the end goal, not sacredness and encountering God. That there is a tendency to lead all truths to be symbolic, and never objective. That Jesus & liturgical life is witnessed to students as being dispensable. And that there exists a real reluctance to tackle the difficult subjects acting as stumbling blocks to faith (often because the staff themselves do not agree with the Church, or feel the students will be offended). I will attach examples of these, but all of them can be addressed simply, and with great charity. My faith journey right now is one of seeking ways to bring the Gospel into those very areas, the areas that seem to time and time again act as walls to staff & students encountering God, or drawing deeper into relationship with Him. God bless.

I was born and raised in the faith, attended a Catholic parish youth group (Antioch) and Catholic schools—but it wasn't until I turned 20 that I had my encounter with Christ and started to learn the faith and embrace the teachings of the Church. Four main factors contributed to this: 1. A wonderful priest was appointed to my parish. On first impressions, I thought he was strange: he didn't watch TV, he didn't joke around at the expense of others (he was extraordinarily charitable), he turned every conversation to Christ. He celebrated the Mass with such love and reverence that it was difficult not to take notice. He didn't conform to any of the superficial ideas of what might make a person popular, yet people were drawn to him. He gave me a lot of time. He gave his time to anyone who needed it, actually, and left nothing for himself. But he didn't draw us to himself, he constantly pointed us to Christ. I went to see him for advice many times, and every time he would take me straight to the Church and sit with me in the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. He taught me how to pray, he gave me plenty of reading material, he connected me with other young people who were on a similar journey and he continually challenged me not to settle, but to go deeper. He is a radical, authentic witness. 2. World Youth Day 2008—it was the first time I saw the Church in all its vibrancy. It was actually the first time that I saw religious in habits—which really struck me as a visible sign of a life poured all out for Christ. I heard a teaching on the Theology of the Body at this WYD, which blew me away as I had never heard anything like it before, and yet as soon as I heard it I knew it was true. This prompted me to start searching for truth—and so began my journey of faith formation, reading lives of the saints etc. 3. I attended the 2008 Youth Leaders Formation Course in [ - ]. This was a powerful, powerful time in my life. It was a combination of the intellectual formation, the beautiful experience of living in community and growing in charity, and most importantly, the hours upon hours spent sitting at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament who took everything I had been learning at an intellectual level and showed me how it needed to take root in my heart, and be integrated into my life. Had I not had that time I can say with confidence I would have not had the strength to abandon the attachments I had in my life at that time that were completely contrary to the Gospel. 4. Connection to a Christ-centred faith community with a genuine desire for holiness. While I had the guidance of a wonderful priest keeping me on track for a time, once he moved on I needed ongoing support, accountability, encouragement etc.—particularly in my prayer life. If I didn't have this, I feel I would have fallen away from the faith long ago.

I am fortunate in that I felt close to God from an early age. Not that I realised it at the time, but my family was a bit dysfunctional. Obviously not something discussed. We had a



lovely parish priest in my teenager years who really engaged with youth and gave the youth space to explore their faith with his support. I did stop going to Church for a few years and the first time I went to Mass a few times but never was welcomed. I then went back to another church and so many people welcomed me that I was helping out at Childrens liturgy, reading, etc. within months. The Church community is a bit like my second family. We look out for each other. As a small parish a lot more work is falling on the laity who are working, have families and we do not have the supports we need from the Archdiocese or greater Church. God has carried me so many times and it is the Catholic Church where my home with God is.

My story of faith is all to do with people within the Church that I have admired. I attended 9 schools, only 2 of which were Catholic, but within the Catholic schools I had caring, loving teachers who I felt really valued me as a person and taught by the way they lived that I wanted to be a part of the Church and receive the sacraments, although my family werent very interested. As an adult, I decided that I had to marry a Catholic who shared the same values. Ive always enjoyed Mass, Adoration, Teaching and now have a fairly firm grasp of Catechism and am able to speak to others what I believe. The prayer groups I have joined have always had people within them Ive trusted and admired. In other words it has always been, people, people, people who are authentic who have guided me along my spiritual path. They have taught me to always trust in the Holy Spirit and I believe in my heart God loves me.

I am married a non-Catholic, we have been married for over 40 years. My wife recently has been confirmed into the Catholic Church. I have brothers and sisters who have been divorced, and would love to come back, but have been held back by rules and regulations of years past.

I attend a Liturgy of the Word and Communion once a month and each service (led by both men and women) has been a very prayerful experience, with some absolutely beautiful, very thought provoking reflections given by, again, both women and men.

For most of my life, I have been a practicing Catholic. In the early days, I wasnt an active member of my parish community. I went to Mass and that was about it. I had a fear of God and saw going to Mass as a duty (a ticket out of Hell). As I have grown older, my faith and love of God has grown. This has been in part through the Church and with other organisations I have been involved in during the course of time. I have met many wonderful people who demonstrate their service, love and commitment who have been wonderful examples. They have reflected what our Church should be about; love of Christ and love of community. In my view, these are the two elements of our Church we need to foster. Then in turn, we go out to those who arent in relationship with God and share our wonderful faith.

The abuse in the Church has been one hell of a shock to all of us. There is no excuse. How could / can these MEN represent a gentle, kind, empathetic, compassionate God when they do this. They thought they could get away with it and the Church thought so too. How dare they!!! I feel nothing but disgust and find it hard to see them as made in Gods image and pray for them, but I will. My own experience of the Church has gone from worshipping out of fear to worshipping out of love. I cannot wait to get to Mass on Sundays and other times when possible. Without the Eucharist, we are nothing and yet we



have abused this most wonderful gift. I was abused by a priest as an adult and suffer untold guilt but will never share because I blame myself. I approached the Archbishop at the time who reprimanded me with the words "How dare to speak of one of my priests like that". The next bishop listened but did nothing. Never offered to speak or arrange a meeting with him. I was only able to meet with the two bishops while attending conferences concerning school matters. I have dealt with the matter myself only sharing with my spiritual director. Ive not been to the sacrament of reconciliation for over 20 years due to abuse beginning there where I went to seek counsel for a marriage concern. This left me leaving my own parish and going to another but the priest has since died and I can now worship in back in my parish but have chosen to stay where I am most of the time because I feel welcome and at home there. Forgiveness is hard but so is the realization that we are not all perfect. I keep thinking of the plank in my own eye!

##I have completed this form before but wish to say more. My parents would be turning in their graves with what has been revealed about our hierarchy these last few years but especially in the previous few months. They would be feeling guilty that they portrayed the priest as someone to be revered, respected and believed. I also feel the same, well I did, but things have changed big time for me. We have some wonderful priests who like us are struggling to hold their heads high. If it wasnt for Who I am following rather than what, then I would have packed my bags and left long ago. Personally, I have suffered abuse from the hands of a priest, as did my brother. Both priests are now dead, but it doesnt make the abuse any the less. For me, it began with a call for help. In my fragile state, I was taken advantage of but I am angry that I allowed it to happen, seeing that I was an adult. I have not shared this with anyone apart from my spiritual director and have no intention of doing so due to shame & guilt on my part for being so stupid and naive. There is so much that needs to change in our Church and if the changes e.g. female participation in the running of the Church, married priests, a more open dialogue between leaders and the laity, less stuffy clerics with less and less outward signs that tell the world how good they must be, a more humbler Church including cardinals and bishops of which there are far too many dont happen well it will be curtains for me. The clergy is supposed to be a witness to Christ and his way. All that pomp and ceremony now gives me the creeps. I know that ceremony is called for at certain times, but keep it simple and to the point. Abuse—how could we let this happen? Pretty obvious that these perpetrators were not men of God. Anyone knows that hurting a child is wrong. Its not rocket science. I pray for them because I believe that they are made in the image and likeness of God and I am conscious of the plank in my own eye, but what they have done disgusts and shames me to the core. If changes are not made to our Church as a result of this Plenary, and within a reasonable time, I will have no choice but to leave the Church as I know it. Changes from Vatican 2 have still not been implemented so what makes me feel this will be any different? The hierarchical Church needs to change. Our priest is wonderful and himself a victim of abuse, but he has encouraged us to full participation in the plenary discussions, has given his people control over certain areas of ministry and we feel confident that while he is away and we will have no priest for a month that our Sunday liturgies will sustain us as a community of believers. We feel just like the early Church and find support and comfort in our community.

I see the Pope washing people's feet, thats the only story you need.

I had a wonderful spiritual director who told me to choose love and not fear. This pathway is always a difficult one to pursue within any human family because of the complexities associated with human relationships but then I came to realise that Jesus was capable of healing the deepest of sorrows and empower me to choose love over fear. Fear is such an ugly demon that expresses itself in such terrible manifestations.

Of my Confirmation, aged 12-ish sometime in the 1990s, the thing I most clearly remember is the sense that I was being recognised as an adult in the Church. What followed was decades of steady attendance at Mass, growing engagement with the life of the Church through liturgy and social welfare, but all of this despite many of the institutional Churchs acts, assertions, and attitudes. Talk of youth (youth-groups, special liturgies, etc.) always felt deeply patronising, and obviously fails most teens. I feel strongly that my generation (people now in their 20s-30s-40s) have been driven from the pews by bland preaching and at times offensive messaging. One Christmas Eve Family Mass in recent years, I endured a homily about the evils of abortion. I have watched family members slowly give up weekly attendance at Mass, and while sad about it, I understand. They cant be bothered coming to Church when that Church wont take the simplest of steps towards them. I also feel a strong sense of vocation, a calling to use my gifts for Christ. But I feel thwarted by an institution that sees my love for a partner as an arbitrary ban on my even contemplating priestly service. I have no real inclination to prance about in vestments, but I feel that God might be calling me to a particular form of service in ways I dont fully understand. I feel frustrated by the Australian Churchs turning to foreign people instead of its own, or ordaining men whose love of the collar greatly exceeds their intellect or any sense of human compassion.

## CONCLUSION

This report presented a summary of submissions that were received from your diocese in Phase One of the Plenary Council process called 'Listening and Dialogue'. The findings are in response to three main questions:

Question 1: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?

Question 2: What questions about the future of the Church in Australia would you like the Plenary Council to consider?

Question 3: Would you like to share a story about your experience of faith or of the Church in Australia that has shaped you?

Phase Two of the Plenary Council: *Listening and Discernment* is already underway and will continue until early 2020. The purpose of this stage is to listen deeply to what the Spirit is saying through the responses that have been submitted in Phase One and to understand and connect with the sense of faith that has been shared by the people of God across Australia.

We hope this report helps you in continuing to lead and encourage the engagement of many people in your diocese in this second phase as we discern together how God is calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is:

- Missionary and evangelising,
- Inclusive, participatory and synodal,
- Prayerful and Eucharistic,
- Humble, healing and merciful,
- A joyful, hope-filled and servant community, and
- Open to conversion, renewal and reform.

The National Centre for Pastoral Research sincerely thanks all the people from your diocese who participated in the Listening and Dialogue phase and those who continue to be engaged in the preparations towards Plenary Council 2020. We wish you and your diocese all the very best for the journey ahead.

## **APPENDIX 1: COMPLETE LIST OF COUNTRIES OF BIRTH (Individual responses only)**

The table below is the full list of individual respondents' countries of birth from the Archdiocese of Hobart.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Australia	120
Canada	1
Finland	1
France	1
Hungary	2
Ireland	3
Kenya	2
Lithuania	1
Netherlands	1
New Zealand	2
Philippines	1
Poland	2
Sri Lanka	1
Switzerland	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	8
Not stated	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>

## APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

This is a complete list of group submissions from the Archdiocese of Hobart. Groups that did not provide a name were omitted from this table.

Name of group	Group size
Sacred Heart College New Town Tasmania	440
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 1	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 2	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 3	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 4	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 5	350
Burnie Wynyard Parish Group 6	350
Immaculata Community (1)	213
St Therese of Lisieux Moonah Lutana Parish	125
Sacred Heart College New Town Tasmania	80
St John's Catholic Parish, Richmond Tas	61
St. John the Baptist (inclusive of St. Monicas	29
Launceston Parishioners	18
Launceston Parishioners	18
Mersey Leven Parish Small Group	15
Immaculata Community (2)	10
Parish Group Launceston	9
Thursday Morning Listening & Dialogue Group, Kings Meadows Catholic Parish	9
Friday Morning Listening & Dialogue Group, Kings Meadows Catholic Parish	9
Tasmanian Social Justice Group	8
Launceston Parish Small Group	8
Calvary Health Care Pastoral Care Team Hobart	7
St. John the Baptist (inclusive of St. Monicas	6
CET Principals 8	6
CET Principals 4	6
CET Principals 1	6
CET Principals 5	6
CCEL Group 3	5
CET Principals 7	4
Not a formal group, just a discussion gathering.	4
Informal womens spirituality group	4
St Josephs Community	2
Emmaus monastic community	Not Stated
Archdiocese of Hobart	Not Stated
Archdiocese of Hobart	Not Stated
St Marys Cathedral Hobart	Not Stated



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