



Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

A Report to the Diocese of Sandhurst

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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

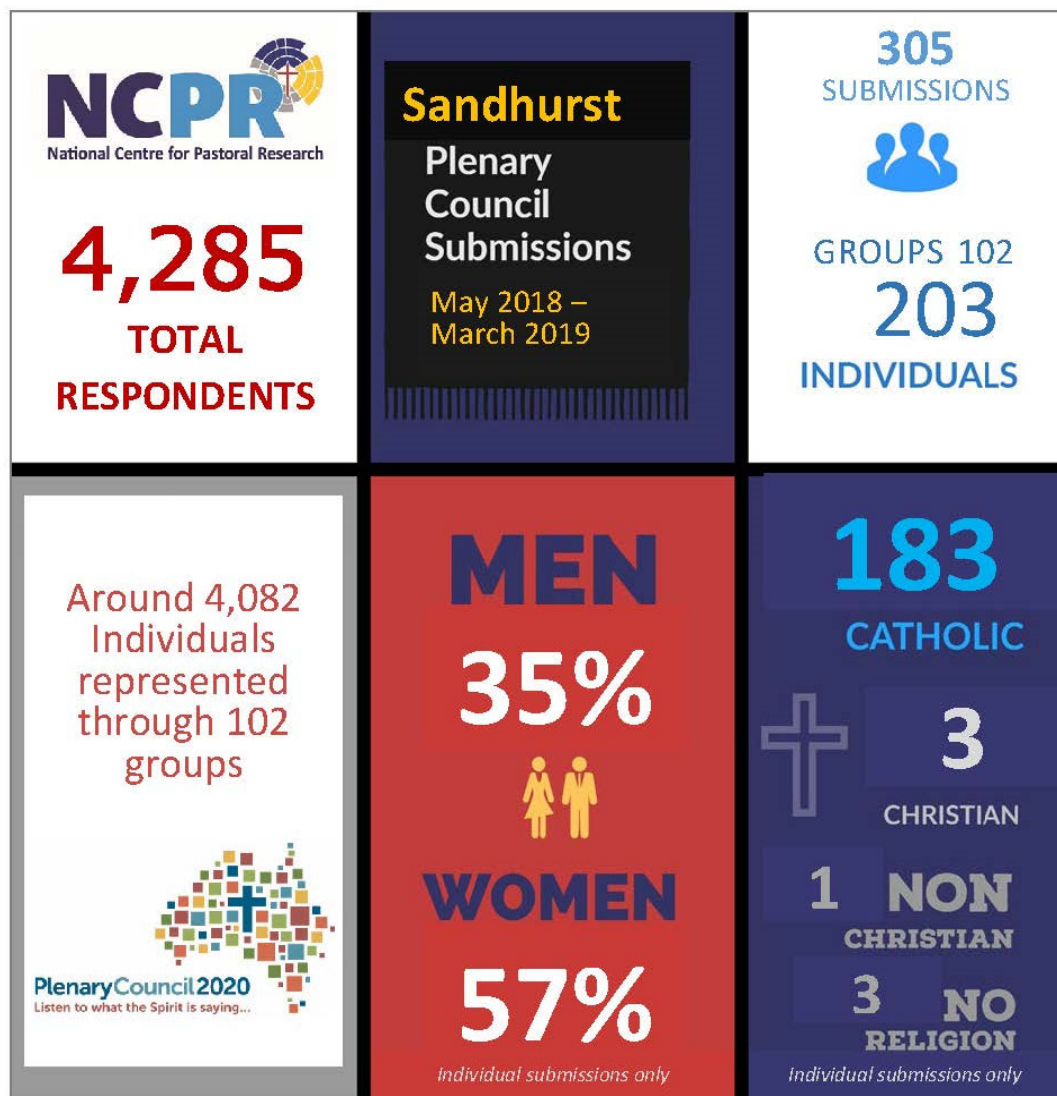
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Diocesan Submissions Summary Snapshot: May 2018—March 2019



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 - Sandhurst

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 Diocese of Sandhurst, we received a total of 305 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 197 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 24 were unsure if they had. About 82 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 305 submissions, 102 submissions were from groups or organisations and 203 submissions were from individuals. There were 4,082 people represented through the 102 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 4,285.

Table 1: Number of Submissions	
Total number of submissions received	305
<i>Participated in Listening & Dialogue Encounter?</i>	
Yes	197
No	82
Not sure	24
Not stated	2
Total	305
Submissions received from groups or organisations	102
Submissions received from individuals	203
Total	305

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 203 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 Sandhurst. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 70 per cent (143) 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 (32 responses).

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

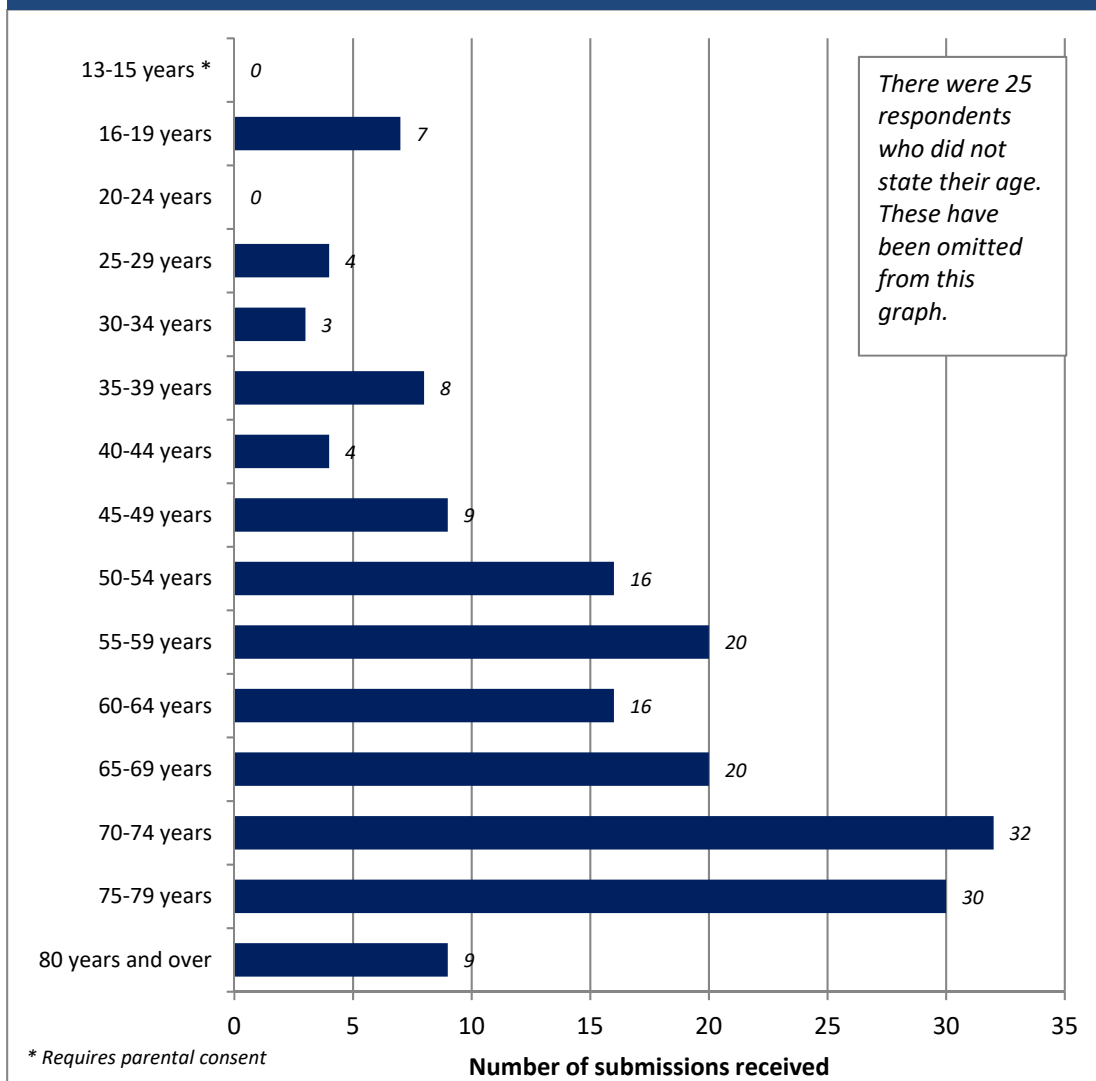
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were seven individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

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	7
20-24 years	0
25-29 years	4
30-34 years	3
35-39 years	8
40-44 years	4
45-49 years	9
50-54 years	16
55-59 years	20
60-64 years	16
65-69 years	20
70-74 years	32
75-79 years	30
80 years and over	9
Not stated	25
Total	203

* 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 (57%), while a further 35 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 70 men and 116 women who made submissions. Nine respondents preferred not to state their sex, while eight respondents did not answer this question.

Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)

Female	116
Male	70
Prefer not to say	9
Not stated	8
Total	203

Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (77%) were born in Australia. Just over seven per cent came from other countries, while around 16 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.

Table 4a: Countries of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	156	76.8
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	4	2.0
Other Countries	10	4.9
Not stated	33	16.3
Total	203	100.0

Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	156	76.8
Other English-speaking country	8	3.9
Non-English-speaking country	6	3.0
Not stated	33	16.3
Total	203	100.0

Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	145	71.4
Other English speaking country	9	4.4
Non-English speaking country	12	5.9
Not stated	37	18.2
Total	203	100.0

Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	139	68.5
Other English-speaking country	13	6.4
Non-English-speaking country	14	6.9
Not stated	37	18.2
Total	203	100.0

* 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 was one individual who identified themselves in this way, representing just under one per cent of all individual respondents.

Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (individual responses only)	
Yes	1
No	167
Not stated	35
Total	203

Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 203 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 183 respondents (90%) were Catholic. Three respondents were from other Christian denominations while there was one from a non-Christian religion. A further 13 respondents did not state their religion and three respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)		Person	Percent
Catholic		183	90.1
Other Christian:			
Anglican		1	0.5
Baptist		1	0.5
Other Christian		1	0.5
Non Christian:			
Sikhism		1	0.5
Other religion		0	0.0
No religion		3	1.5
Not stated		13	6.4
Total		203	100

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 145 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were ten respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while six respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 22 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

Table 7: Religious description (for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)				
	Female	Male	Not stated	Total
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	84	56	5	145
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	4	6	0	10
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	1	0	0	1
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	5	0	0	5
Other	13	2	3	18
Not stated	2	2	0	4
Total	109	66	8	183

GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 102 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 4,082 individuals were represented through these groups. However, four groups did not report their numbers of participating members, indicating that the total number of people represented through the group submissions may be higher.

While 82 group submissions provided a group name, 20 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 Galen Catholic College with around 1,280 members. There were also a number of other parish and school groups such as the St Mary of the Angels College with 680 participants and Kerang, Cohuna and Pyramid Hill Catholic Parishes with 300 members. There were 11 other groups with 50 members or more.

Table 8 : Group submissions from the diocese	
Name of group	Group size
Galen Catholic College	1,280
St Mary of the Angels College	680
Kerang, Cohuna and Pyramid Hill Catholic Parishes	300
St Liborius Parish	200
St Mary's Parish Echuca	150
Responses from St. Mary's Parishioners, Mooroopna, Vic	70
Sacred Heart Primary School, Yarrawonga	60
St Marys Myrtleford	60
Sacred Heart Parish Tatura	53
St Kilian's parishioners	52
Sandhurst Religious Education Coordinators	50
Sandhurst Religious Education Coordinators	50
St Mary's Myrtleford	50
Wangaratta Catholic Parishes Plenary Council Listening and Dialogue Sessions	50
Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Bright 3741	45
Diocese of Sandhurst	35
Diocese of Sandhurst	35
St Joseph's Primary School	34
Marian College Myrtleford	32
Mrs	32

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 1,939 members. This was followed by the group aged 50-69 with 793 members. There was no age provided for around 90 group members.

Table 9: Estimates of ages of people in group submissions	
<i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Under 20 years	1,939
20 - 29 years	178
30 - 49 years	409
50 - 69 years	793
70 and over	569
Unknown	90
Total	3,978

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

Of the total 4,057 group members whose sex was reported, 54 per cent (2,203) were female and 46 per cent (1,854) were male.

Table 10: Estimates of sex of people in group submissions	
<i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Female	2,203
Male	1,854
Total	4,057

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 five topics discussed by participants from your diocese were:

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

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

- Love God, Love neighbour (Chapter 4)
 - *Greater focus on Jesus Christ* (p. 30)
 - *Better faith formation* (p. 38)
 - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God* (p. 29)
 - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching* (p. 32)
 - *Care for neighbour* (p. 36)
 - *Being a witness in society* (p. 34)
 - *Greater focus on the Word of God* (p. 31)
 - *Renewed call to holiness* (p. 35)
- Leadership and Church governance (Chapter 7)
 - *Greater role for women* (p. 83)
 - *New model of Church, diocese, parish* (p. 93)
 - *New leadership and governance model* (p. 91)
 - *Ending clericalism* (p. 80)
 - *Greater involvement of the laity* (p. 84)
 - *Greater leadership from bishops* (p. 87)
 - *Greater leadership from priests* (p. 88)
 - *More formation and support for priests* (p. 89)
 - *Working together in unity* (p. 95)
- Sacraments (Chapter 6)
 - *Holy Orders - Ending celibacy/ allowing priests to marry* (p. 66)
 - *Holy Orders - Ordination of women* (p. 69)
 - *Greater emphasis on prayer and sacraments* (p. 64)
 - *Emphasis on praying the Rosary* (p. 65)
 - *Restoring the Third Rite of Reconciliation* (p.75)

- *Concerns regarding overseas priests (p.71)*
- **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)*
 - *Living in peace and harmony (p. 112)*
- **The Mass (Chapter 5)**
 - *Inclusion of the divorced and remarried (p. 46)*
 - *Different translation of the Mass (p. 56)*
 - *Emphasis on: New translation of the Mass (inclusive language)*
 - *Greater attention to music (p. 53)*
 - *Mass to be appealing to youth and children (p. 54)*

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

- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse (p. 102)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p.151)*
- *More welcoming parishes (p. 161)*
- *Greater concern for victims and survivors (p. 101)*
- *Focus on ecumenism (p. 129)*
- *Listening to the laity (p. 138)*
- *Outreach to the wider community (p. 123)*
- *Stronger parish communities (p. 156)*
- *Modernise Church teachings (p. 169)*
- *Listening to one another more (p. 136)*
- *Greater connection with and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (p. 120)*

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 32 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.

Not to judge others, to see Christ in others, to be welcoming, kind, compassionate and have empathy for others. Listen and respect the older members of our faith community, as sometimes they can feel left behind, and that their spiritual journey should have evolved and moved with the current Church.

To love one another to understand each other and to take care of each other.

To make His presence more visible and our Christian community to be seen as more relevant.

To repair a broken Church, a Church broken by clerics who by their actions signal that they are not accountable to the people of God. People who they are called to serve as pastors, but instead have been princes who hide behind their concept of loyalty to the Vatican, and despite their occasional fine words, by their practice place the pastoral care of the people as a low priority. Clergy who are unsuited to leadership, often scrapping positive structures left by the previous leader, leaving devoted and caring parish members disenfranchised. Celebrations of the Eucharist, being mechanical and uninspiring, due to many of the readings being irrelevant and blindly called "the Word of the Lord" with no adequate (if any!) attempt to make them understood by the congregation. We have lost several generations of young people.

To follow the leading of the Holy Spirit while testing each possible action against the depiction of the Christ of the gospels who walked the country homeless, accepting all except religious hypocrites and teaching and healing, but giving a special place to the marginalised.

The consensus of opinion of the group was that the primary and critical issue that God is asking of us today, is to take this opportunity, as lay people (the body of the Church) to use our baptismal responsibility to advocate for cultural reform of the current entrenched, outdated, and counterproductive culture of the Church in Australia (and globally).

God seems to want us, as a whole Church, to do something major to correct the harm we've done by abandoning the Christ vision of what a Church community should be. Our current model of Church is nothing like the original Faith Communities . . . but I'm not suggesting we have to go back and exactly replicate those early Christian communities. But today's Church of hierarchy-dominated clergy has led us to near disaster. Somewhere along the line, women in the Church have been pretty well packaged into non-speaking-out-of-sight roles, whereas the emphasis on Christ's teaching was we were ALL to serve—which now should include priests, bishops, all clergy, all laity, male and female. To me, it seems that the current Clerical Club mentality has led us to this terrible state of the need for a Royal Commission to uncover the abuses and the attempts to hide the abuses by those who should have been condemning them. We need a completely different model of church. And we have to be SEEN to be adapting a different model of church: a church that is open and accepting of many ways of being, that might include married men and women in leadership roles; that is non-judgmental, inclusive, open and accepting of people just-as-they-are. So often we hear, 'Come As You Are' then exclude them from Eucharist. If we haven't enough priests for Eucharistic celebrations, maybe we need to encourage lay leaders to enable communities to gather and pray together—without a priest. What sort of priests are we currently forming in our seminaries? Pastoral? Or Clerical?? Mass and sacrament dispensers?? Importing priests doesn't really seem to be working out—cultural differences and no preparation for the OS priests or the parishes they will serve, makes it all very difficult. We don't need priests who seem to be simply celebrators of Eucharist and administrators of sacraments. Is it too much to ask for Shepherds?

The Church has failed God. Needs to promote more of a relationship with God. An experience of divine is missing in Church celebrations. Not enough reverence in worship. There needs to be changes made in Church mindset and attitudes. Need stronger leadership and guidance. It is not attracting new people. Bishops need to earn back our trust and need to be transparent. Leadership is gone!

I work in Church ministry, and often feel God close to me when I engage with the other through whatever means connects us. This is a skill I feel God has gifted me with, to seek connection give value to the other's story. I feel God is in the encounter whether his name is mentioned or not he is in the care, love, compassion etc. of the encounter. I sense that our generation do not automatically connect with our Mass and we need people who can be flexible in the way they present our celebration so that we making the gathering meaningful for everyone. I have experienced this on a few occasions and feel God calling me to explore this in other areas. I do not in any way want to play down the importance of Mass and other celebrations but I feel unless we connect with the other then our words fall on deaf ears and the opportunity to spread the good news is lost. I feel flexibility and listening to the Spirit are the keys to ongoing ministry with today's world.

What is God asking of us in Australia?? Concerned about the healing process. Forgiveness, hope and loss of trust. If our Church does not recover—will we join with other Christian denominations? If so good. Role of the Diaconate—only if women and men!! One person, bishop, or a priest, should not be allowed to ‘get in the way of the Holy Spirit’, to disregard the voice of the people. And that has happened too often. Talk about support from the Church community—but why is that we were so unwilling to discuss the fact that our two daughters are gay and our son had a drug problem?? The Church does not play a major place role in my life—even though I am still a weekly Mass attender—I don’t know why. I am happy with what I believe in—wider community not just Catholic. I think God wants us to be all in one boat—not different boats [ecumenism]. In my days in another denomination—I have fond memories of Junior Fellowship and Senior Fellowship. Perhaps that is something that the Catholic Church could look at? We need greater ‘marketing’ of Christianity! Motivation in regard to competition to time—so many things on—how can we motivate people to prioritise faith and Church?? We are so consumed with materialism that has let our active participation in faith matters go by the wayside. Perhaps this is because we have become too well off? The annulment process must be let go of. Why does one ‘mistake’ as in a broken marriage—mean exclusion? Allow divorced Catholics to remarry and have full participation. The 3rd rite of Reconciliation should be opened up and encouraged!! We want to be able to offer Jesus to people. Pastoral letters from the Church need to be written in more simplified. How can the Church address current societal issues e.g. family breakdown, mental illness, suicide,—based on Gospel values. There should be more counselling, mediation etc. Why is marriage break up so rampant? How can we ‘market’ the support the Church can give individuals in their time of need? How can we attract more priests, nuns, lay ministry? How can we all teach, lead younger generation? The Church can be a road map for life. How can we let that be known? I think God is asking us to be more community minded—aware and present to each other. Following the shattered trust from the whole Sexual Abuse scandal no longer can clergy sit on a pedestal thinking they can call all the shots and everyone will ‘pay and obey’ because they will not!! I think God is calling us to genuine listening and collaboration, to use people’s skills. Exclusion of gay and divorced Catholics is anti-Christian!! Liturgies must change! Less words. Less readings. More participation of all the congregation. Homilies / Reflections—delivered by various people—not just the priest.

1 I think that God is looking to a complete change in the attitude of the clergy to the laity and the eradication of all manifestation of Clericalism which has corroded the Church from top to bottom.
2 Also there needs to be a complete change to the way in which the Church attempts to increase the numbers in its adherents bearing in mind the Massive attrition rate in the attendance at Church and it’s almost total failure to attract younger people and school children to participate. The guilt for this monumental failure lies squarely at the set of either the Catholic educators and / the Clergy. At the present rate, the Church will be effectively moribund in a generation. There is an almost a complete lack of any proselytising of the Christian message and all that is undertaken is ritualistic and repetitive preaching to the converted. The damage done to the Faith by the revelations of the Royal Commission are almost insurmountable but God will require the Church to find a pathway to reverse this Inconvenient Truth.

SAVE OUR CHILDREN... Our children are our future, not only for the progress and growing of our Catholic belief but also for the positive forward and secure growth of our communities. While we accept that the majority of our younger population are positive and self-preparing to contribute and to share their energies and attitudes going forward, and are full of enthusiasm for the future of their generation in the Church and social network. There is unfortunately a large number of children that have either lost direction or who have never been given direction. Without having access to the actual stats, I see every day through the various forms of the media, the number of incidents relating to violence, alcohol use, drug use, disrespect for law and order, rape, suicide, in some cases of children not yet in their teens, and no regard for community wellbeing. The number of cases relating to mental issues seems to be on the increase due, I believe, to the confusing nature of life, this is highlighted by the non-availability of treatment for depression and anxiety. The obvious decline in young people at Mass receiving sacraments should be of real concern. A lot of this is our fault. A lot of this is the fault of our parents, and their parents. As young parents, we were just thrown into the difficult task of parenthood without any formal training at all, the only guidelines we had were handed down from our parents, usually by way of example. We are an outcome of that generation, we all tried our best and most times we succeeded, there was however a large proportion that was lost to the negative attitude, call it bad parenting, lack of social support or simply that the individual was a "bad apple". (I do not support the bad apple theory). Whatever the reason was, or is, I can now see an opportunity to begin to re-align our methods and practices of bringing up children. The Plenary Council 2020 is a great place to start. We can recognise our good methods and enhance on them, and we can also recognise our not so good methods and make them better. We need to set in place more awareness training for future parents, parents of school age children, our children who will eventually be parents to secure an awareness path that can be put in place that will assist future generations of the righteous attitude to life. This is something that we naturally inherent but sometimes misplace. I would like to see an outcome of this Plenary to give special attention to arming future parents with the real knowledge of Christianity and person responsibility. By doing this constantly, future generations should see a reduction of the issues stated earlier. We must embark on an intense programme of training our future generations of the virtues of our Lord Jesus when he said. 'You will come to me by loving me, your Lord, and your neighbour'. [-]

Married priests, Women priests, Aboriginal spirituality in Sunday liturgy.

I think God may be asking that we treat each other respect and dignity regardless of race, creed, financial position or intellectual or physical disability. I think the market is saying that we need to move away from institutionalised religions to the approach used by the people at the time of the writing of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Essenes) who believed in a more direct line of contact with God supported by principles of living with each other. A review of the Ten Commandments would help inform this discussion.

God wants his Church to be open, inclusive of all people, worshiping in a people orientated way expressing the ways of modern praying people and communicating their love of God and adoration in meaningful ways. God wants a people's Church where people have a say in how it is governed and administered with a language that is meaningful to all members of the Church...

- * To know God, to love God, and to serve God.
- * To increase vocations to priesthood and religious orders.
- * To have more permanent deacons in parishes and to allow more married priests.
- * Be more familiar with Vatican II documents and put them into practice.
- * To have a welcoming, sharing and caring Church where ALL people of all ages are respected and valued and included within the parish.
- * Review man-made Church laws and change them where appropriate.
- * Review and strengthen the place of faith at all levels of the Catholic education system: within the Catholic Education departments; within Catholic parish primary schools; within Catholic secondary schools and tertiary institutions. With respect to your children and people, don't lose them from Church when they leave school. Bring young children (and their parents and families) back to the sacraments; as well as bringing back young people back to the sacraments. Have Adult Faith formation (both in theological institutions and in parishes): example; have scripture study; have catechism study; develop a love, understanding, and deep desire for all sacraments, especially the Eucharist; develop a love for and understanding of liturgy and the liturgical year; be more familiar with various saints;...
- * Have participation in devotions—adoration and benediction; divine mercy; the rosary; deepening one's spirituality and one's relationship with Jesus; learning to listen to Jesus and God and to live out one's faith and baptismal commitment.

To be strong in the face of recent outcomes and knowledge from the child abuse Royal Commission. To pray about challenges in faith and I would like to hope that God is asking us to modernise and be more accepting of all people. What would Jesus do when faced with someone who doesn't meet the "normally" accepted person in the church? My view is that Jesus would accept all followers, no matter whether they are black, white, gay, or heterosexual. Jesus did not discriminate and I would like to think that God is asking of us the very same thing.

The Plenary Council offers Australia the opportunity to show leadership in the world Church by listening to the Spirit and discerning where we need to go.

I am the Catholic Identity leader at [-] Primary School in [-]. I presented a lesson on the Plenary Council to our entire Yr 6 cohort. First, we watched the YouTube clip on what the Plenary 2020 means and we discussed the process. I then asked the students the question IF JESUS VISITED AUSTRALIA TODAY WHAT WOULD HE LIKE TO SEE? The students in groups of 4 came up with some interesting ideas. See below Plenary Council 2020 Responses from Year 6 [-] Primary. If Jesus came to visit Australia what would he like to see? No homeless people. Peace in the Australia and the world. More respect for our environment. Making a difference and accepting people for who they are without judgement. Female priests. Married priests. More people at Mass. Better music, kid friendly liturgies, comfier (sic) seats at church, more welcoming to everyone, entertaining priests, live bands, have a sausage sizzle after Mass, people being grateful for what they have. More forgiveness. People who stand up for their beliefs. The Indigenous people being given back their land. No one addicted to drugs. More respect for our elderly.

Empathy. Getting rid of poverty. Donating to good causes. Good religious education. No cancer. More churches so people don't have to travel so far to get to Mass.
The Catholic Church needs to take back control of the narrative regarding human life that held that the condition of human life under creation is unalterable; in this 21st century, we live in a world totally disconnected from reality where we all willingly or not must take part in efforts to establish a more perfect world and repeatedly see that those efforts lead to even worse conditions than those they sought to remedy.
To say how we are feeling about our Church, our experiences. I guess why we stay connected or are trying to stay connected in these difficult times. And why so many are being pushed away or have turned away.
I believe God is asking the Church to support initiatives for parish Adult Catechesis, as is done in many other countries (see attached word document for outline of suggestion).
To bring the Good news of the Kingdom. We do this by acting with love and compassion towards everyone regardless of religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, citizenship or wealth.
<p>For God's Church to thrive it was decided that the pivotal element was "The need to belong". From this comes the opportunity for personal/ spiritual growth. Participants felt that there is a direct flow on from this awareness of being welcome and therefore belonging to the Catholic faith. It was thought that the Catholic Church has so many people who belong "on the fringe" and only those few on the inner circle who are very involved. This situation extends from young parents, through all the age groups to aged care. Reasons for parish involvement being only for the chosen few are many and complex, but the end result is a rising number in the "fringe" zone. This realization met with a reaction of "How can we fix this?" It was decided that this deep need to belong is the way to move forward. Everything else will flow on from that.</p> <p>To live a life that will lead us to heaven.</p> <p>To work towards having a church for all age groups. The young people are absent except for a small handful. Relevance for everyone is paramount.</p>
God is asking us to be humble and acknowledge and respect the traditions of the Catholic Church as instituted by His son Jesus Christ. Currently the Church appears to be infested with those that are proud and think they know better that they take liberty to change the Mass. This is the reason so many young people in Australia are leaving the "modern Church" and embracing the traditional right. The Australian faithful are fed up with Australian leaders not standing up for the protection of families and the institution of marriage. Australians are fed up with leaders desperate to maintain their positions by not rocking the boat and having the praise of the world. We want leaders that take up the cross, fight for the protection of life and fight for the truth.
To live the gospel on a personal level with the notion of Christian love central in our life. In doing this we need to respond to the needs of the community, based on the principles laid out in the gospel. There is the need to reach out to people—especially young people—to get them engaged in understanding the role of God in their life and community and hence developing a relationship

with God. Catholic Church and Catholic organisations do excellent work in caring for the needy in the community—the sick, the aged, the poor. This work is applauded and must be continued. The work of the Church and Catholic men and women who make up its body, is a positive and constructive influence in the community. Despite the difficulties, we mustn't lose sight of this achievement and we must continue to build further.
Women to be allowed to be in roles of spiritual authority, especially women in religious life.
I'm told it takes 2 generations to change attitudes and thinking. My 49-year-old son (who has an intellectual disability with a neurological age of 5 years) is one of the first generation of "children" who were not institutionalised and now moving into care because of aging parents. I support another man (who has seizures) to attend Mass. We need "Inclusive" committees" to support, welcome, include, ALL people.
To return to Him.
Have the hierarchy of the Church listen to the laity. Generally, I think the Plenary Council process is a good way for the existential crisis that our Church is facing in Australia to be addressed. However, I see it all being a waste of time unless a vote in the final decision making meeting is given to both the laity and the clergy. The PC process, we have been told gives votes at that meeting only to the bishops. This is so stupid. The power to make binding changes to the Church is being given only to the group who led us into this crisis! Consequently, I see no purpose in contributing until the laity and clergy also get a vote at the final meeting.
<p>On Monday 13th August 2018, eight young adults (30's and 40's) met in our home in Wodonga to discuss the Plenary council. These are the notes from the night.</p> <p>Questions / Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be greater roles for people—more empowered—having parishes work as teams. • We need to build a real community—shifting the culture—our parish is a building where most people gather for an hour on Sunday and tick a box—done. A parish should be a community. • Invest in schools ministry—right teachers / leaders—The school is church for so many of our kids (the school is the place where they are connected to the “God stuff”). • Laid back—Australian society—“What I like about the Catholic Church is I don't have to promote it, or get people to be part of it. I can do it quietly.” • There should be Unity—between Christian Churches. • Church is more than just Sunday—shifting the culture. • Mission statement—are we still trying to work out what Church is in Australia? • Access—sound, vision, accessibility—as musicians it is frustrating when the sound desk, microphones and data projectors do not function well. People should be trained in how to use this equipment (a new ministry) and money should be spent on updating older equipment. Including be able to hear the priest or whoever is speaking from the front.

- We need a Function room / Hall / Meeting place—to welcome people, soup kitchen, café—100+ people (our parish turned to parish hall into a clothing shop for the schools and small meeting rooms). We can no longer gather in large groups.

- All my frustrations stem back to theologians can't run an organisation. They don't have the skill set to run a parish. We need a person trained as a Business manager, to manage the business—whose job it is to engage more people and bring them in to Mass, to increase community, “Should be working on the business, not in the business.” The parish priest is not a job, it is 15 jobs. It is a madness. You could not advertise this job in a newspaper. A medical practice has a business manager. The doctors do not run the business. The group of 8 adults included 5 teachers in Catholic schools (Primary and Secondary), 2 accountants and a gardener. All attend Mass weekly. Some of these people run the Sacramental Program in the parish. Others run the Youth Ministry and are involved on a Diocesan level. Others are involved in the music Ministry. 4 of the people run the Children's Liturgy that runs during the Sunday Masses.

Working towards the common good and preserving human dignity—asylum seekers, homeless, social justice.

I would like to see a teacher [in a] Catholic school, that can teach basic religion, like how to make the Sign of the Cross, say the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, etc. Unfortunately, these days, not much of that goes on at home. The Children are our future!

- To hold fast to the truths we have learned whether by word of mouth (tradition) or from the scriptures.
- To become more devout in our attendance at Mass, and in our practice of prayerful devotions, enrolment in the Brown Scapular etc.
- To really celebrate our faith—Feast Days, processions, Crowning of Our Lady etc. To make a “bigger deal” of First Communion, Confirmation.
- To have more social activities within our parish community.
- To be aware of what is happening on the wider scene, and to know where the Church stands on current issues. Don't rely on the secular media to stay informed.
- To make fast and abstinence laws, in fact any and all Church laws, better known—stronger, if need be.
- To provide better Sacramental Preparation programs—work toward increasing the parents' knowledge of their religion so that in fact they have something substantial to pass on to their children.
- To wear our faith with pride and not be embarrassed, reluctant or ashamed to have it known that we are Catholic.
- To know and accept what it means to be Catholic.
- To know what our Church requires of us, and why.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To realise that we have the Way of Truth, and that the Church doesn't need to be changed to suit our morally destitute society.
<p>Not that I can speak for God but I would presume God would be asking us to go back to the source to the Jesus who sought justice demonstrated love to all, especially those sitting outside the "law" of the existing establishment. A change of heart in the current establishment. A redistribution of wealth and power may be a starting point. Power corrupts absolutely and absolute power corrupts absolutely.</p>
<p>To have a real concern for the salvation of souls. Jesus came to preach repentance!!</p>
<p>The Church should return to worship of Jesus in the Eucharist. The way a percentage of priests and bishops do the consecration at Mass, they focus the adoration onto themselves rather than Jesus in the host. The priest should be at the head of the people facing the unseen God.</p>
<p>The Church is good, we just need to get the young families to come to Mass and be part of our parish community. How? Do we get them involved in the parish community first and then Mass will follow? To encourage the young especially the Grades 4, 5 and 6 children to take over the singing at Mass and sing some of those great hymns they learn at school. This does put pressure on the staff for preparation of the children; allow parishioners with WWCC and teaching abilities to assist with this ministry. Have Youth Masses; encourages the young families. Have Church celebrations appealing to the new generation—Mass with youth, music and musicians. Do we need to use other venues for Church celebrations? Can Mass be celebrated in a hall or a park if it encourages the young families to attend? Can marriage be held in a garden if it increases the number of young people to get married in a venue of their choice? Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them". Young families need stimulation, more modern music and involvement on their level or is it too late? Modern Music (such as Fr. Rob Galea's) Many of the younger generation feel strongly about social justice and I suppose this is their way of Church without the formalized gathering.</p>
<p>Pascal, in his <i>Pensées</i>, characterises Jesus this way: "He said great things so simply that he seems not to have thought about them, and yet so clearly that it is obvious what he thought about them. Such clarity together with such simplicity is wonderful." The Church in Australia needs to conform itself to this description of Jesus; it must not shrink from saying 'great things;' but these things must be said with simplicity—without political calculation, without engagement in sterile culture wars, without the inhibition of human respects. The Church needs to speak clearly to proclaim the mercy of God, to present Jesus as the icon of the merciful Father. Obfuscation smudges that icon. Honesty requires that we do not pretend to be what we are not. We need to engage in a courageous examination of our institutions: if a Catholic school is staffed almost entirely by non-Catholic teachers, or non-practising Catholic teachers, in what sense is it actually Catholic? This question tends to be swallowed up by extraneous and competing accounts of what it means to be (a) Catholic (the utterly barren and extraordinarily tedious 'conservative' versus 'liberal' discourse). This is an evasion—and the Church must avoid it. The question must be addressed as it is: how is it possible for people not actually engaged in a praxis to inculcate and pass on that praxis to others? I do not wish to suggest that schools engage in a hunt for teachers who miss Mass on Sundays; this question is much deeper and more significant and a 'tick-box' religiosity is</p>

no sufficient answer to it. But in the thickets of discourse about 'recontextualisation' and data which practises to deceive, the clear, simple and evangelical method of making disciples vanishes. 'Come and see' is an invitation which can only be offered by a person who, for all their sinfulness, lives life differently on account of Christ. An obstacle to this kind of clarity and simplicity, in my view, is presented by diocesan and non-systemic education bureaucracies. Bishops and presbyters who have the office of disciples in a very particular sense, only engage with schools in a mediate fashion. Schools need to feel the presence of these shepherds—and the shepherds need to have "the smell of the sheep." It is not sufficient to hand over the responsibility for forming Christians to a bureaucracy, no matter how well qualified, for this is to ignore the office and charism possessed by the Church and to surrender to an anodyne and immanent managerialism. School communities—teachers and students—need witnesses in the martyrological sense, and not Diocesan Directors of Education.

I think that God is wondering "what is going on". More and more people are turning away from the Church. Some of our priests have not been Christ like and have engaged in paedophilia. Some think that they are above the ordinary people. Some have accused parishioners unjustly. There are some, thank God, who are good men but they seem to be very few.

We think the Church is ok, and should stay the same. Maybe some more upbeat hymns. Find new ways to keep us elderly in care connected to the wider Church, e.g. live streaming of local Masses. Ecumenism is alive and well in aged care home, maybe the model of respect for difference could be adopted by wider Church. The old missions brought back, great for faith formation. Engaging and passionate leaders, people who can captivate people with their faith.

Following the devastating outcomes of the Royal Commission that itemised the role of decision makers and leaders in the Catholic Church, I think God is asking us about how our Church will look in the future. We know that the Church is not the same as the one we were baptised into or that our parents and grandparents were a part of. Many of us have retained our faith, despite it taking quite a beating as non-Catholics and others criticised us for the omissions of the leadership of the Australian Church. We have had to defend the Church's performance, its tax exempt status, its receipt of school funding to name a few issues, because our leadership has been derelict in this space. Some of our leadership has been great at addressing the shortcomings of the Church. Others have been appalling and left us angry and despondent about our hopes for a better Church moving forward. So, I think we are being asked about how we can re-shape and renew the Church's structure to retain our existing base, but also to bring believers back into the Church. We know that Church attendances are declining in many parishes and young people in particular are deserting the Church. Why would they be a part of a Church that is irrelevant in their daily lives, that is uncompromising on issues that matter to them—for example, marriage equality? We, the flock, are clear that more of the same is not an option in Australia. We need to revitalise our approaches to make the Church an important part of our lives. Interestingly, "Catholic" is still the major religion recorded by Australians in Census data, but that is not translating into participation or commitment.

With world unrest at the levels currently being experienced, it has never been more important to have a genuine and authentic Christian religion. Acknowledging past mistakes by the Church and the Clergy is paramount and implementation of a genuine format for the future that continues to

demonstrate a Christian approach to education, health care, Aged Care and social justice matters is essential.

God asks of us today what He has asked of us, His creatures, always: conversion, repentance, prayer, virtue, Christian perfection, holiness. As Our Lord in Holy Scripture exhorts us, “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48) At no time in history, has God asked otherwise of us. Verily, the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ, and the establishment by Him of our Holy Mother the Church, were bequeathed to us by our Heavenly Father for this very end, the salvation/sanctification of our souls. We Catholics, knowing that we are men and women created by God, are called by Him to a life of holiness, no matter what our state or office in life. Even Pope Paul VI, despite the damaging and modernist “spirit of Vatican II”, was able to reaffirm this universal call to holiness in *Lumen Gentium*; “...all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity...” Yet, it appears that a great many Catholics in our time do not recognise this call to holiness. In part this is because many of our shepherds fail to remind us of it, let alone charge us to respond to it. But the blame, perhaps even the greater part, lies also with us, the laity. If we are to take our baptismal vows seriously, and if we truly desire to grow in the knowledge, understanding, and practice of our Faith, then we will hear, we will recognise, we will respond to this call. Let us not forget that the world, the flesh and the devil besiege us daily, to drive us away from our Faith and Sanctifying Grace. Let us not forget, the lives of the Saints, who fought, by the Grace of God, our spiritual enemies, and in the end, overcame them to attain the Beatific Vision in Heaven. And let us, in light of the evil of sexual and homosexual abuse committed by our clergy, consider what God wants of us today by soberly reflecting upon the words of St. John Eudes: “The most evident mark of God’s anger, and the most terrible castigation He can inflict upon the world, are manifested when He permits His people to fall into the hands of clerics who are priests more in name than in deed, priests who practice the cruelty of ravening wolves rather than the charity and affection of devoted shepherds. Instead of nourishing those committed to their care, they rend and devour them brutally. Instead of leading their people to God, they drag Christian souls into hell in their train.” To appease God’s righteous anger then, let us commit ourselves to a life of conversion, repentance, prayer and virtue. A life of holiness. And to that end, let us always meditate on the ‘Four Last Things’: Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell.

I believe God is asking us, as Australians, to lead the World Church in a revolution. I think our Church structure is not what Jesus asked of us and cannot continue with the current power imbalances built in. I also believe our Aboriginal Elders need to be listened to as part of the Holy Spirit's call for change. The Uluru Statement of the Heart should be proclaimed by the Church. We need to be leading the way with our First People in caring for our Country.

Equality within the Church. No more second class citizens because they are female.

To seek justice and compensation for victims of abuse by the clergy and the lack of a response by the Church leaders. To have less as individuals but to share more with our communities. To care for our common home. To be the love of God in the world/ To help those who have no safe home or means to care for themselves. To be more inclusive—women, migrants, people with disabilities, reconciliation with Indigenous people. To love one another, regardless of our problems, issues and interactions. To be peaceful with one another, regardless of our

circumstances. Be grateful for our current lives and look out for those less fortunate. To be inclusive, practice inclusivity with all and appreciate the individuality of all. To care for one another and the world. To be inclusive of different needs, identities and backgrounds. To not be vindictive of others and differing views. To recognise that differences can exist without threatening the Catholic or Australian identity. To consider our impact on the world. To be kind to one another. To care for our environment to ensure our future can enjoy its riches. To speak freely and come together as one in peace. To join as one community. To reflect on daily interactions and choices to enhance our focus and connection to him and the people around us. To love and welcome all, ignoring all differences.

*More Holy Days of Obligation. *2 or 3 hour fast before Holy Communion, so that receiving the Blessed Sacrament will not so easily become a matter of routine. *Daily Masses at times that will allow people who work to get to them (e.g. 7:30am) *Good, solid sacramental preparation. Preparation for receiving the Holy Eucharist should include stories of the Saints, especially those who had a great devotion to the Eucharist (e.g. St. Tarcisus; Bl. Imelda); Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Devotion to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist needs to be encouraged—so many people do not believe in it. *Preparation for Confirmation should include stories of the Saints, especially the martyrs, who fought for Christ until death. Also, children being Confirmed should really know what they believe; it would be a good idea for the bishop to give each child a 'test', asking them questions about our Faith and its essential aspects; also asking them if they are willing to die for the Faith. *Our Catholic schools are simply not teaching the Faith, because it is being watered down to accommodate non-Catholics. Schools that water down the faith turn people from it; they think they know the faith, but they don't. *Catechism classes, perhaps as a Sunday school after Mass, based on tried-and-true methods—(i.e. Baltimore Catechism). Please, do not water down the faith, especially to children. As Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, "People are turning away from Christianity today, not because it is too hard, but because it is too soft". The more we learn of our Faith, the more we come to appreciate its beauty and meaning in our lives, and the more we come to love it. This is an important part of encouraging a greater love of God—one cannot love what they do not know. *We need to evangelize by being truly Catholic and living out our faith, bringing back the practice of: Corpus Christi processions; celebrations of the Feast Days; Adoration, and Devotions, especially the Rosary and First Friday and First Saturday devotions. Devotions need to be fiercely promoted. It would be wonderful if our priests could lead by example, by being actively involved in devotional practices, and promoting them in their Sunday homilies. *Catholic libraries attached to parishes, with the Catholic classics and writing of the Saints and Doctors of the Church (e.g. The Imitation of Christ, Introduction to a Devout Life, the Story of a Soul, etc.) made available for the faithful to read. Many conversions of the Saints themselves occurred because of spiritual reading. *Make Confession available in the half-hour leading up to Mass *Bring back a Friday fast to every Friday, not just those in Lent. *Priests should not be pressured to retire; priesthood is a vocation, and not a career. *Social activities to build a strong Catholic community supporting one another on the pilgrimage to Heaven: fetes for Feast Days, movies of the Saints, spiritual reading groups, May crowning.

I believe God is challenging us to be more open. We are all challenged to take more responsibility and be allowed to take more responsibility in the Church. God is calling us to be less concerned

with money and acquiring things and more concerned with the needs of people in Australia and around the world. God is calling on us to be courageous and to share God's message and God's love. As our community becomes more secular and political decisions are further from the teaching of the Gospel we are challenged to be able to articulate what we believe. We are also challenged in the light of the abuses within the Church to hold all in the Church accountable including and especially the clerics. I believe God is calling on us to implement Vatican Council II. It is time to move from a Church which attempts to keep the laity as children. We are called to be an outward facing, community Church.

To Acknowledge the First Peoples of our Nation. To seek/strive for equality to be witnesses of Christ—to be Christ's hands, feet, presence in the world. To attend to Human Rights/Social Justice. To live in both worlds the secular and Catholic. To seek to understand. To not just be passive in our Church. To be prepared to put our voice, our speak forward. Love God, love our neighbour as yourself and Be not Afraid. To live out the Gospel values.

To be inclusive and appreciate the diversity of all. To be active in the world and in Church. To be a compassionate Church that places healing at its centre. To be active and intentional in all our actions, mindful we are Christ's presence in the world. To advocate for the poor, the marginalised, the excluded. To be a reconciling Church. To acknowledge our mistakes. To act humbly.

Return to the Church of Jesus: welcoming—especially outcasts, inclusive, listening, non-judgemental, open, compassionate. To invite/engage young people. Women in leadership positions. Stop abuse. Healing needed after Royal Commission. To be ecumenical. Speak boldly against injustice. More dos than don'ts, Christians, not Catholics. Gather regularly not necessarily Mass. To improve our ministry; co-operative ministry, laity, priests and bishops working together. To invite parishioners to be involved in parish life/events, hospitality. Do not be critical of priests. Encourage and support Catholic education, teach social justice. Respect for the gift of the Eucharist. There is conflict between the Church law and Jesus message. Hierarchy to be servants as Jesus taught us—to become like little children. To trust that God will lead change in the Church, move forward focus on the future.

I think it's time to be open to new programs, encouraged by the priests in each and every parish. Even if there is only one or two responses. Value each and every sheep. Renewal of faith, Alpha, Life in the spirit. Ran like a business would run things. Advertising to attract people. Parish associates to run at least two different seasons per year. Instead of waiting for someone to have the courage to ask. Assume that people want something to feed them. A 10 minute sermon on Sunday hardly contributes to much spiritual growth. As Catholics we don't even discuss it afterwards. We are short on the will to evangelize our neighbour. Fr Rob Galea's stirring up of young people, surely they could run youth groups in each parish for those who are interested or want something to share. By paying for their fuel would allow them to travel. And to run programs that actually have spiritual content not just good times. Money could be sourced from people who like to leave their wills to the Church. Caritas more active locally. People have skills, sewing, bike fixing. Mosquito net fund raising anything that is seen and felt at the local level. Parish councillors could do a stint. In Australia, we could promote specific things to pray for peace or rain. [-] parish prays for rain as a Church body every Sunday. I believe this is Holy Spirit led by Mons [-]. Do you have any idea what it is like to really need something for your and your animals' well-being? And

every year gets a little deeper and harder to cope with. Marriages could also feature. Pray for children to return to the faith. Would be on many people's hearts. In truth the religious seemed very removed from us on this subject. I quote St John of the cross. "Strive to preserve your heart in peace; let no event of this world disturb it". I have no doubt that these words are true, but I don't see much available to help one rise to and take hold of truth.

God is asking us to stay faithful to Catholic doctrine and the Mass and not get caught up in fickle modernism that is ruining the Church. The only thing we need from the Church is to teach the truth in an unadulterated fashion and to provide the sacraments.

Need peace. Need to ensure young men who go into priesthood have had some life experiences. Need to allow priests to marry. Women should be allowed to be ordained as a priest. Need more youth Masses. Look at how the apostles lived and use that to base our rules. Must make connections within community. Remove filters so we are more inclusive—Jesus welcomed all to the table. Some Catholic staff in Catholic schools are failing to give witness—not Church going, so younger people then question the importance of Church involvement. Problems with immigrants not prepared to assimilate and have a different value system. Many priests are now coming from overseas where their ideas of Church practice are a lot more traditional and so there is a disconnect with the congregation—need to work on making this relationship work as it is critical to the future of our Church. People want to return to the Church and be able to participate in full (Holy Communion) but there is a hurdle with the confessional—they would prefer if Rite 3 of Reconciliation could be offered as an alternative, this would pave the way for them to be "welcomed" back into the Church and participate in full. We need to review how religion is taught in our schools—basic principles such as the 10 commandments (right from wrong). We must focus on the God and messages within the New Testament—not the old. The Old Testament at times presents a very different image of God that frightens and turns people away. Must accept that God has an interest in all that God created. God has no gender or race—God represents all and is inclusive. Our Church must be more open and welcome all. The Church must lead the way in caring for the environment. People must not be excluded from communion e.g. divorcees. We must not return to the Pre-Vatican 2 days where Catholics did not mix with the Non-Catholics. We must be open to working alongside other religions. The Church is hurting because of abuse in our Church and we need more transparency. Victims must be heard and cared for—that is what Jesus would have done. Need to reflect on the purpose / role of the Church. Define in a language easily understood by young and old, Catholic and Non Catholic. Judge all suggestions of process change on whether they add value to the role/purpose of the Church. People must not feel judged—after all we are all sinners. We need to empower local parish worship—to increase youth participation etc. Times have changed and the Church must change to meet the needs and obligations to changes in society. The Church must celebrate forgiveness and talk about a loving God who is waiting for us to return to him.

*To stand firm and remain faithful *At present feel like we are sinking in quicksand. *The Church has forgotten its grass roots people—the faithful who keep coming each week and supporting the parishes. *Eucharist is the centrality to our faith and community, it is the glue that keeps us together. It does not matter where Eucharist is celebrated—in Church or in home, what matters is that we gather as a community. * Those present felt betrayed and forgotten e.g. George Pell story

* We need to go back to the basic beliefs, Love God and Love your neighbour, not all the rules and regulations that have heaped guilt on the laity for centuries. The faithful are being tested and paying for the sins of the clergy... our biggest question is How do we describe our faith to others?

A. The governance of our Church needs reforming, B. Urgent need to address clericalism, Pope Francis cites clericalism as the root cause of abuse of power and sexual abuse, C. Church leaders to be accountable, responsible and transparent. D. Greater inclusion of women in decision making. E. Empower the laity whereby clerics work collaboratively with them. Avenues for dialogue/appeal where there are issues of concern i.e. instances of excessive abuse of power by P P. Currently we have nowhere to appeal/express concerns. Laity feel disrespected, disenfranchised and frustrated because bishops do not support our needs and dismiss our concerns.

Change the Governance and management of the Church and give and let the laity be heard about the life and running of their Church. Laity fully involved in parish and regional decision making. The issue of clericalism and a male dominated Church be addressed. Our priests need to be one of us, that they see themselves in this light. The decisions we make together as a parish community are implemented by us together and that the capacity to over-rule on issues or not even consult, become catapulted into ancient history, Need to recognise the core of our Catholic life is a personal loving relationship with God and welcoming support for those who are poor, hurt, estranged or suffering (such as refugees, Aboriginal peoples, abused, homeless, gay, divorced) should follow from this love. There is an ongoing reality across many examples and issues, that requests to the parish priest, submissions to the bishop and similar Church hierarchies, and either filtered out from their intended reader and decision maker, or alternatively never acknowledged or acted upon. We live and practice our faith in a male-managed vacuum.

To whom it may concern . . . FYI. A real-life scenario . . . a little life-lesson to set the mood. About 20 years ago, our parish community used to hire a bus and attend the annual Catholic race day for a day out together. It was fun . . . a sharing of food and fortunes as the races were run. . .the fellowship enjoyed, and friendships refreshed. To my great surprise, fortune came my way @ 77-1 after a fall disrupted the leaders, and my horse walked around the wreckage and over the line. Whoopee! Even better, it was the second-last race, so the winnings weren't dissipated. We all left the course, and in high spirits I asked the bus driver to call past the bottle shop to obtain supplies for a shared celebratory tippie on the way home . . . however, once again underway, I became aware that [-] and [-] were grumpy at the delay. . . they wanted to get to a vigil Mass at their end of the parish. Which prompted my question; "Does their Jesus lived in a faraway Church? . . . then the observation that . . . "my Jesus was on the bus sharing a stubby. . ." Her response. ." [-] . . you scandalise me". . .!! • So . . . what is / where is, our Jesus today? Do we all think we know a different Jesus? • The Jesus that I have come to know and love and rely on is always in and amongst us . . . and . . . no-matter-what is going on, we are loved. And we are asked to act in the same way. That's it. Over Rover. • Sadly not so in the Church-on-high . . . but you already know that can of worms. Not pretty. My learnings have told me that Jesus faced the same problems with the Temple worshippers and the hierarchy in his day. Nothing to see here . . . we all know that stuff. Or do we? • Or maybe I'm wrong there . . . maybe we don't know today. Our faith education is not where it was once. We were fortunate in that our diocese ran excellent programs

for years in Bible study, Christian Leadership, Liturgy, RCIA, Retreats and the like. We had excellent visiting speakers, many gifted communicators that brought our spirits to life. Parish priests and nuns that worked together in community schools. Laity encouraged to assist . . . obviously we need to recover the “spirit” now dormant. Our then bishop foresaw the coming crisis in priestly vocations and did his very best to educate and thus empower any lay disciples in his flock. Sadly again, not a practice continued by his successors. Must fix this . . . Another little story. . . At one of our [-] weekends, our speaker stood up in front of us assembled with two books, held up one and asked. . . “what’s this book?” It was the New Testament, and he gradually teased out of us that essentially it was a “book of love”. The other book was the Catechism and as it was held aloft, the ensuing discussion concluded that . . . “there’s not much love in there”. • And sooo (sic). . . the Jesus message of love, gets buried in often silly and outdated rules made by men. The model He left for us has been increasingly corrupted to the point where people jus ...

1. The top of our list is priests being allowed to marry. This must be allowed if our Church is to continue. Many other faiths have married priests and they lead strong parishes. This will encourage a much broader range of committed people to become priests. 2. Women priests and more prominent roles for women in the Catholic Church. Women are often the backbone of our parishes and are capable and strong people often with wonderful people skills crucial to being a leader of a parish. 3. Community links with the Church must be strengthened and nurtured to allow the Church to be a more relevant part of the community. The links need to be stronger with the St. Vincent de Paul society, families/children/youth and the schools. 4. Rules that have been man-made need to be revised and questioned. We need more questions raised about exactly who is making decisions within and for our Church. The Church community should have people on boards high up in the Church—not only priests—so that decisions made are relevant and meaningful to life today. The “Men’s Club” mentality needs to be broken. Rules about divorce, contraception etc. need to be reconsidered.

Thank you for the opportunity given us to submit our prayerful thoughts for consideration by the Plenary Council. At every juncture throughout history, God has mercifully sent a chosen soul/souls to lead us to Himself when we have gone wondering, lost, in the desert: Before Christ—Abraham, Moses, the Prophets ... After Christ—The Apostles, the Early Church Fathers, founders of Religious Communities, chosen souls with a special message for the needs of the time: e.g. St Margaret Mary Alacoque, St Louis de Montfort, St Therese, the three Fatima children, St Faustina, to name but a few, all with a message for the time and all within the embrace of Holy Mother, the Church, under the leadership of The Pope and the Magisterium. I sense today, with all the scandal that has befallen us and with each day news that can cause deep hurt and sorrow within and without the Church, The Holy Spirit is calling each of us to return to The Heart of Jesus, The Heart of Mary, to spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, to truly ask, “Lord, show me Your Heart; put Your Heart in me that I may be Your instrument within my circle of influence. Put me aside, that it be You Who once again walk the earth through me. Make me humble, not seeking what I want, but what You want. Mary, My Mother, you who knew Your Son like no other, place your heart in me, that I may love Jesus with your Love and love my neighbour with your heart so united with the Heart of Your Son.” Our people are so lost, we think we know what is best for us—abortion, euthanasia, living intimacy in ways that are unnatural. If only we could help each other

to go to Jesus, to hand our worries, our situations to Him with real trust and let Him take care of them... but that can only happen if we are shown how to pray. We need our priests to return to their first Love so that they can give us The Source of Authentic Love, Jesus Christ once again, truly present in The Mass and the sacraments. We need praying families that lead their children by example. We need to really look at all the issues that are present in the world and see how to respond according to The Heart of Our Lord, not as the world wants us to respond. As our Holy Father Pope Francis exhorts us, as did Pope Benedict XVI and St John Paul II and all the Popes before them, "let us keep our gaze on The Lord. Let us ask His Blessed Mother to help us." Thank you, again for this opportunity. [-] and [-] parishioners, [-], [-].

To clean out all that is in our Church that has lead us to this terrible, humiliating place in history. To re-build a Church that closely follows Jesus's teachings and example . . . taking a special note of how Jesus turned the current temple teachings upside down by welcoming and dining with outcasts/sinners. To note that his choice of apostles were not learned temple men, but simple and men and women. To stop judging . . . especially about who and who cannot come to Eucharist with us.

I think God is asking us to creatively define the meaning and challenges of Catholic Tradition. Currently there is an overemphasis on "the real presence" in the liturgy and that which is prohibited in matters to do with human sexuality. The latest changes to the liturgy and an increased emphasis on human unworthiness are contrary to our fundamental belief in a loving God, an abundance mentality and the importance of the Eucharist giving expression to our appreciation for the blessings which life presents for us. The reforms of Vatican II have been shunned through an insistence that the Eucharist is solely based on the participation of the priest and the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Aspects of the Mass like the Penitential Rite, scripture, prayers and the sign of peace haven't the same emphasis and in many cases are optional extras that are not part of the main game. The Latin translations simply do not help us capture the richness of the tradition in our culture. It's as if this is just an intellectual exercise for those with deep theological training to indulge with. Some of the prayers simply don't make sense and a response such as "And with your spirit" detract from our understanding of the priest being a fellow pilgrim with the people. This is an instance of the Latin just not working for us. It was addressed in Vatican II but has been shunned by a small group of intellectuals indulging themselves and not having empathy with the ordinary everyday worshiper who wants to celebrate and correspondingly be uplifted. The Australian Church rolled over and accepted all this without any critique, it's as if isn't it great to have returned to the good old days. I admire one priest who in the early days after reading the prayer after Communion commented "Did that make sense to anyone"? It is as if English grammar and syntax are of secondary consideration to those who know better. It comes across as intellectual snobbery. God is calling us to be bigger than this and to open our hearts and minds to the richness of symbol and ritual. Bread and wine are the stuff of life, this symbolism has been lost. The power of the priest and the place of transubstantiation dictate everything. This focus on mystery has left me cold and detached. Our tradition is much bigger than the way the Church teaches in matters to do with human sexuality. What minimal thinking underpins things like a divorced person not being able to receive communion or a gay person not being able to teach in a Catholic school? Our God and our

tradition are bigger than this. There is too much emphasis on what is not possible and not enough creative thinking about what a loving God is calling us to be. Catholic means welcome all comers, this should be our starting point not the scarcity mentality which currently pervades our thinking.

I believe God is saying the way forward for the Church, is for people to be introduced to Christ first as a personal, loving friend—I believe this will lead people to Church to meet with Jesus, the loving friend through the community and the sacraments. I believe the mistake the Church has been making, is making people Catholic and sacramentalising them first—giving them religion first instead of Jesus first. I also don't believe there is enough emphasis on the relationship with the person of the Holy Spirit, which is essential for every person to become a Christian...

To love as God intended. Church Community is important to have. Respect without compromising your faith values. Have Social Justice awareness within your community. Reaching out to the Unchurched. Focus what's great in our Church/embrace the fullness of God and our relationship with him. Don't make it scary for children/parents. Try not to make it sound like an obligation. Acceptance of different levels of faith. Make it known that all are welcome. Breaking the stigma that the Church is all about rules. Harmony. Embrace the change—"Do it scared". Community. Silent listening in front of the Blessed Eucharist. Adoration and Benediction. Fire and Earthquake=society, Whisper=God calling. Christianity disappearing in society. Media=Anti-God. Western World against Religion. History—Sunday was dedicated to God. Consumerism=tech, cars, events. No teaching of Religion anymore. Religious Instruction should be a priority. Youth Ministry needs to be supported and invested in. Giving young people the opportunity to feel connected to the Church and to being able to make it their own. Helping young people understand the importance of their role in the future of the Church and how their voice can make a difference. Connecting young people, forming community and fellowship.

Keep Christian Living alive. See the face of Christ in everyone who walks through the door. To be a more inclusive Church—divorce, LGBTQ, etc. To be a healing Church—not only around abuse issues but other wrongs. To have more laity empowerment—Laity in Leadership and decision making roles.

Church exists to proclaim the Good News. Image of Church is damaged. Plenary appears reactive and needs to change to a proactive action. Mirror for God. Reach out to people—outward looking. Our God, not My God. New strategies needed to rejuvenate Church in increasingly secular world. Parishes to go out—don't wait for people to come. Get to know Jesus again—remember that relationship. Go back to the word of God—keep scripture at our heart. Nurturing of hope within community. Inclusive—often exclude the most vulnerable. Women's involvement and recognition of this. Listening confidentially and non-judgmentally. Healing with First Australians. Adapt the Church to Modern World—fast-paced world, how can we slow down to allow the changes necessary? Engaging with the "whatever" people. The cynical nature of youth. Embrace multiculturalism. Empower laity—their critical role in leading Church back to Jesus. Go back to basics e.g. Scripture. Provide faith formation opportunities. Re-evangelistic focus. Need for inclusion, even of "other". Remember God Moments are in the people.

Call out leaders for their behaviour, especially on the focus on rules over faith. Rules are good, but not more important than a relationship with Jesus. Open and accepting of LGBTQ+ community

and others, prisoners, refugees, etc. Teachings do not have to change but Jesus' main teaching is to Love one another, not to exclude them. Also a chance to integrate into the community/society as a whole. Finding purpose, jobs, connecting with community and God will assist in improving Mental Health. An engaging Church that seeks to involve people from a young age. So many are bored in Mass but youthful preachers/priests who are in touch with the world will help make it relevant for their lives. More singing in Mass—but singing with joy and passion, not just going through the motions. Also, the appropriateness of music. There is nothing wrong with using old and new songs, but the actual playing of music and singing needs to be joyful and reverent. Not every Mass is a funeral so music should reflect that. Allow priests to marry. This will encourage greater involvement in community, rather than being removed from it. Learning Parables when younger helped teach morals, attitudes and ways of being a part of a community/society. More of a focus on teaching in this style should continue on after primary school, even as an adult. Teach people how to be peaceful and how to find strengths and weaknesses. The Church should enable people to have a future they can look forward to. Generous—help all people. Keep improving ways—not just helping those living in poverty, but also generosity in regards to sustainability—donate/invest time into saving the environment. Use the tools we have, e.g. Social Media, to have a wider outreach. Notify people of events/opportunities, connect people and engage youth. The Church should provide community and a place to form connections. It should support all within the local community, not just those that come to Church. The Church should be something that people can connect with, cling to and believe in. It can help provide certainty and clarity for everyday life. Sustainability and the Environment are such big issues that connect to everything else. The Church needs to actively do something about this—not just words, but deeds. Gender Equality—Church Leadership is all men—priests, bishops, etc. Authority should be given to women within the Church, not just in organisations surrounding the Church (organisations like CatholicCare, Catholic Education, etc.). Why can't we have women priests? Did Jesus really think women weren't capable of leading, because if so, that's not a church that young people want to be involved in.

God is asking us for good leadership, to have the courage of our convictions, stand firm in our faith especially during this time of persecution caused by the sexual abuse scandal. We are asked to practice forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion in our dealings with all people. We are to be disciples of Jesus, imitating him in the way we live. We are to be tolerant of everyone especially those who are different/outcasts/refugees! We are to be non-judgmental and give of our time to listen to each other. God is asking us to get out of our comfort zones and be active in the community/parish. We are asked [to] allow time in our day to communicate with God by prayer and meditation. We are asked to be proactive in changing the culture of the hierarchy of the Church which has allowed child abuse/abuse cover up and abuse of power. More women are needed in leadership positions. We are asked to be supportive of changes in the Church which may come through the Plenary Council. We should invite and encourage parishioners to become involved in parish life/events and connect to non-Mass attendees in social ways. We should be welcoming divorced/remarried, homosexual Catholics instead of judging them. We should respect all people in building up the kingdom of God.

To listen to all the people, most especially the laity.

Plenary Council notes 25th Feb 2019. Australia needs a moral compass in outlook, awareness of others and the inequities of this country. Australia needs a lesson in respecting and loving each other. God is asking to sin no more and stop Australia in becoming a humanistic society. There is no strong leadership from bishops and priest. Stand up and draw the line and move forward from past mistakes. Be inclusive of all. Leadership needs to be approachable. How do we get more youth involvement? God is asking for a praying Church. Lots more prayer is needed. At times we lose sight of what is important in prayer life. The Church lacks asking Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom. As we go through this mess we need to stick together and hang on tight. We need to confront and speak up when problems arise. How do we approach the healing process? Disappointment of sexual abuse cover up. What can I do at grass root level? Feel that grass root people are forgotten i.e. the faithful that hang in there no matter what. Connection from top to bottom (grass root) has been severed. God is asking us to reach out to the ones who are down and out. Connecting the parish with diocese and local town people. Bishops to be more transparent. Why does the abuse happen in the first place? How can we help the youth? Physiological tests for seminarians and priests. And stronger focus on pastoral care and sex education for seminarians.

God is simply asking us to rediscover what it means to live as Jesus did and respond accordingly. This requires change. The Church should become much more focussed on saving the souls of the poor and marginalised rather than seemingly only focusing on those of us who are comfortable and accepted. Jesus reached out to the marginalised, the poor, the homeless, migrants and refugees, the unemployed, those who society vilified and not least women. The Catholic Church in Australia should be focussing on social justice issues not dissimilar to the issues of Jesus' times, and speaking out against practices in our society, which create marginalisation and discrimination.

We believe God is asking us to recognise the need for significant changes to be made in order to bring the Church up to date with today's world. This is particularly important and urgent in the light of the findings of the recent Australian royal commission into institutional child sexual abuse, along with the widespread abuse by Catholic priests etc., in the USA, Ireland and around the world.

Empower lay people, especially women, by overcoming clericalism, limiting their options e.g. diaconate, priesthood. Overhaul of liturgy—use Aussie language, enable laity to be more engaged and involved rather than essentially listeners, homilies that speak to people's life experience. Liturgy is meant to be by the people for the people not controlled by Rome. Need to learn how to engage young people currently un-churched.

God is asking us to:- 1. Ensure the Catholic Church understands the significance of its current dilemma! 2. Ensure the Catholic Church immediately stops covering up and defending itself at the expense of its victims! 3. Ensure that the Catholic Church takes immediate and decisive action to address child sexual abuse and do everything in its power to prevent it ever happening again. 4. Ensure the Catholic Church immediately adopts all of the recommendations coming out of the royal commission.

God is asking us to fully understand the terrible state of the Church today, and to make the many changes urgently needed to overcome the problems and bring the Church into the 21st century!

So much is being said about the negative/sinful things happening in the Church today that I think God is calling us back to look at the Truth and beauty of our Catholic Faith. So many people have lost their understanding of the Faith and the depth of the Catholic Church's teachings/dogma/traditions. So much energy is wasted on trying to find fault, instead of finding true Peace, beauty and being able to forgive past hurts. I know and understand that people have been hurt, but I honestly believe if we returned to learning more about our Faith, that a lot of the issues would be less likely to exist/reoccur, because we would be focussed on attending Mass in a reverent and attentive manner, filling our lives with prayer, and reading Scripture, other inspired writings and the lives of the Saints. If our hearts and minds are filled with what is good and holy, then there will be no room for breaking our deep connection with God and the spiritual life. We seriously need more formation in our Faith, by good, holy and faithful priests/laity. Someone like Father Frank Pavone, of Priests for Life, or Scott Hahn, or others who have studied and love our Catholic Faith, not those who are willing to compromise/weaken/change/incorporate false ideas. We need straightforward Truth, and I believe our young people need this too, as they have so much to contend with in today's climate of anti-Church, anti-Faith. They need stability and something beautiful to cling to, to strengthen them; Mass, Rosary, devotions, and access to strong teaching on life, love and chastity. (St John Paul II's Theology of the Body would be a great starting place).

I think God is asking us to be the best people we can be to ourselves, to others, to animals and the environment. I believe He wants us to nurture our country in a way that makes it sustainable for all. But not to outsmart ourselves and ultimately lose what we have. I believe He wants us to care for one another, have compassion for each other and accept one another regardless of our differences; religion, race, gender, sexual preference etc... I think He wants us to see the good in one another, and see that there is much good in many people of different religions or of no particular religion, or no religion at all; not just those who attend church. However, in saying this, I do not believe that we are expected to accept and simply forgive those who perform terrible atrocities. I think God wants us to become a more united nation; to live as one nation without a divide between the Indigenous people and white people; with everyone respecting and valuing one another, and acknowledging the changes one another have made, and are making towards a better Australia; remembering, but no longer harbouring the bad feelings of the past, but celebrating together; the joy of positive change that has occurred and of which is destined for the future. I believe through positive influence, God wants us to bring people back to the Church. Due to the atrocities that have happened. It will take a lot of change to repair the damage done to the Church's reputation. I believe God wants the Church to move with the times and make the actual experience of Mass a far more real, pleasant, honest, uplifting and almost fun experience. Of which is in language that even the smallest child and rebellious teenager can understand and connect to. Many say that Mass is too hard to relate to; young people tune out and simply don't want to be there. What is spoken about is less believable to many of the young parishioners that have been taught to question and enquire through their school subjects that lead to life questions and of course "The Church". Changes need to be made in order to keep God at the forefront. "He just is", and not behind an endless trail of questions, rules, regulations and discontent due to the Church's diminishing reputation. I believe God is asking all this of us; asking us to think sensibly. In order to honestly, truthfully and truly show, and encourage the good, compassion, love, kindness,

acceptance, care, empathy, and sacrifice that Jesus showed for all. Jesus didn't stand in a building performing the same thing every day, His actions spoke louder than His words. Going to church isn't enough, belonging to the Church isn't enough. Being the best person you can be to yourself and to others is what I believe God hopes of all of us in Australia. The Church guiding and teaching that goodness is important for the great good of Australia. But the Church needs to make Jesus relatable on a modern day level with modern day examples of modern day people.

The faith and practice of Christianity is discovered in the *sensus fidelium* not initially in the bishops, who are overseers of the faith and not governors or princes. Christians must return to the sources—the Scriptures and the Apostolic Tradition. The present situation of the Catholic Church is summed up well in the attached article by Geoffrey Robinson.

I think God is asking us in Australia, and elsewhere, to openly discuss the meaning of the real presence. Many clerics have imposed the notion that Jesus is physically present in the Bread and Wine rather than symbolic. Thomas Aquinas said that he may not be correct in regard to his essay on transubstantiation. Trans-signification is also a reasonable explanation because: did Christ duplicate himself at the Last Supper. Transignification it seems to me gives a more down to earth appreciation of the Eucharist and allows for equal focus of the people gathered who are the Body of Christ.

I think God is asking those managing the Plenary 2020 Synod to override Canon Law and ensure that the majority of the participants in the discernment and decision making processes are laity of whom 50 % are women and 50% are male covering all ages, remembering that the *sensus fidelium* is essential. After all the selection of the books of the Bible were as a result of what the people believed made sense to and supported their human flourishing.

Eliminate clericalism. Implement all the recommendations of the Royal Commission as quickly as reasonably possible, remembering individual confession is not necessary and therefore the seal of confession should not be an issue. Laity, women and men should be encouraged and supported in participating in all aspects of liturgical and sacramental activities of the Catholic Church. Laity should manage all governance matters answerable to Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Committees. Pastoral leaders to have no special role in matters of are not matters of faith and morals or not pastoral matters.

To be an active, engaging and inclusive Church. Including all ages and backgrounds in the community of the Church, without judgment. To be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

To show leadership with accountability and compassion. To review the role of the priests. Review the Mass structure and other means of worship. Currently meaningless to many especially the younger generation. Allow women to be recognised in the role of the priest. Allow suitably trained lay people to give homilies.

To be a welcoming and inclusive Church, without judgment. To welcome and not exclude those who have separated, those who are of mixed gender.

• For a lot of people (particularly the poor and marginalised), they can't think or plan for tomorrow, because they are not yet finished with today. At Mass we sing that God "hears the cry of the poor". How is the Catholic Church assisting in our Heavenly Father's work to hear these people and give them a hope filled future? As Vincentians we want our Church to have mechanisms that will allow the "hear the cry of the poor". We want the Church to have the ability to reach out and reconnect with these people and give them a voice. Currently the Church does not hear them. It leaves such matters to associates like Caritas, SVDP, Br of St. Lawrence etc. If Christ was present in today's world, he would be dealing directly with them. I don't see our current bishops engaging in such worthy duties. It's someone else's problem??? God would advise that his son did such work, but can we???? Do we follow the gospel of Christ, or do we follow our own gospel???

God would be asking how is the Catholic Church going to focus on and deliver the message of Christ to all his followers (the body of the Church), when it has lost connection with the people, with its own inability to have its house in order. Effective Church leadership is totally missing. Let's not kid ourselves, the Church has been decaying for 50 years plus, and lost its way. Here are some ideas of support! Accepting the challenge

Church • We must act now and for the future • We must focus on delivering the message of God • The Church needs to re-identify itself in today's world and declare it thru its mission • With a new redefined identity understand how to deliver in its role • Our Church must reshape to bring its product to the people in today's environment • The Church must be able to demonstrate itself and lead by example Leadership • Church leadership must lead and show the way forward • Review different ways of managing the institutional function of the Church • Hierarchy responsibilities needs to be redefined for the way forward • Bishops must get out of their castles and be active in the parishes (like Jesus would) • Use other but suitability skilled people to support roles (modified deacons etc.) • The Church must review, understand and take better care of our religious members • Effect, active governance and accountability systems to meet the modern world

Function • Clearly define the Church's position on modern world topics (gays, abortion, divorce) • Demonstrate how the individual / families deal with modern day challenges • Actively support family leadership and guidance of the next generation • Meaningful connections to the disadvantaged i.e. poor in spirit, marginalised, broken • Provide spiritual nourishment via parish meetings and forums. Use selected topics • Have a less ritualistic but more pragmatic approach in delivering the word of God

Activities • Link a themed Bible study to the Mass celebration to help spread God's word • Use modern media platforms and or podcasts to stimulate interest, i.e. after Mass • Use more printed material to inform i.e. extend Mass sheet, or JW style brochure • Foster the redevelopment of parish family groups and youth groups i.e. Antioch • Home visits to support family interest and function, a sense of connection • Reinvent and encourage methods to bring prayer into the family home. So, is God asking us to do this, at this time in Australia? If so, please God provide strength with our answer and deliverance.

Challenges going forward—Can Australia respond??????? The Catholic Church has some

monumental challenges going forward. Not only about its future existence, but about its ability to perform its role and deliver the message of Christ to all who follow the Church in their life and spiritual journey, in a now ever changing world. In its present state the Catholic Church is failing in its role to be able to sustain itself in the eyes of its own members, while slowly decaying against miss-trust. Then, in the public arena, via royal commissions, VIC parliamentary committees etc., the Church is being told to change its culture and ways. So, where is the leadership and guidance forward for our Church to a purposeful future? So can the Catholic Church change, really change so as to hear the voice of the faithful (those who are left in the Church), can it hear the public arena outcry, can it see its failings by observations of “signs of the times”, and can it recognise its own inability to lead and govern itself in a changing and modern Australia? Now we have a plenary council, mainly forced upon the Church by the public arena (via Royal Commission, VIC parliamentary committee report on “Betrayal of Trust”) and dissatisfied followers. The plenary council is also necessary for the Church’s hierarchy as they have been unable to make the required legislative changes, or take the steps to bring our Australian Church to be effective in a complex world. So, can the Catholic Church see that change, major change to its structure and business model is required, for it to have a future in a modern world, and again become a credible influence in people’s lives? Then, will the plenary council 2020 bring about the desired results. Can the framework of this plenary council allow for successful outcomes to all invested members of our Church? Will the framework of the plenary council permit all the voices to be heard and listened to, and also allow clergy and laity to share an equal place at the table of representation? Can all invested members of our Church feel confident and assured that they will be fully included in the future of their Church? This is a time for the Catholic Church to have its eyes wide open, be listening in faith, and have healing in its heart, as we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in answering God’s question to us, at this time in Australia. It supports Pope Francis’s call to engage in the world and respond in faith. Let the endorsements of the plenary council be pleasing in all aspects, defining our Church’s way forward and delivering the message of God to all.

God asks us to be Faithful to the teachings of Jesus. As we face many challenges in our Church and community we are the face of Christ. This means that we are to act with justice. We are to be transformational in our actions and we are open and transparent. We need not be afraid to stand up for what is good and how we interact with others should promote inclusivity, welcome and to listen with the ear of our heart. [-]’s College Board believes we need to go back to basics, being true to the word of God and not act like hypocrites, as Jesus pointed at many times to those with whom he encountered. Our outreach should be to the marginalised, the hurt and the broken. Our worship and prayer to be faith filled and welcoming to all who seek the companionship of a community brought together in God’s name. God asks us to have courage, to be patient, and be not afraid. For those of us who choose to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ will experience humanity in its purest form. We will encounter Jesus, we shall act as Jesus would have has act and will walk with our God that loves us unconditionally.

It’s time to change. It’s time to humbly admit that the Catholic Church can also embrace change. It’s time to embrace the modern Church. A Church that is safe for all. A Church that understands equality. A Church that cares more about living Jesus’ story than pomp, ceremony, authority and historical roles. Our world is 50/50 men and women but this is not reflected in our Church. Take

away the barriers to priests marrying. Take away the barriers to women becoming priests. This will increase the safety of our children as the level of sexual abuse would never have occurred with women in the inner sanctum. We are sticking in there. Our faith is strong, our respect for the Church is not. Too many errors without genuine remorse or commitment to change. Bring in leaders who understand how the story can be relevant. Leaders who aren't scared of their higher powers disciplining them as they extend the story to those who have been ostracized. Jesus is love first. The Church is currently love—providing you do not fall even slightly outside of the population bell curve. I'm proud of my faith. I'm embarrassed by my Church when my friends are subject to scorn because of their genetics. It doesn't have to be religion or science. It can be religion understanding science. We can care for those who need it most by being true to Jesus and caring for them as we would want to be cared for. Please change.

I feel that God is asking us to do away with the authoritarian Church which has reigned in Australia in recent decades. Since the appointment of [-] to be Archbishop of [-] in 1996, [-] has brought the arch-conservative Opus Dei to the [-] and indeed [-], turned Catholic against Catholic which allowed conservatives to undermine the progressive parish priests in that state, dramatically changed [-]'s Catholic seminaries into more theologically conservative entities resulting in the ordination of priests who could not relate to ordinary Catholic Australians and drove many people away from the faith. Any chance there may have been for new vocations from the state were ruined by this change. In the early 2000s under the patronage of a conservative Pope, his influence resulted in the appointment of a majority of conservative frightened authoritarian bishops who didn't dare rock the boat and demanded unquestioning obedience from their flocks. Inspired theological thinkers were lost to the Australian Church as well. This authoritarian way of managing the Australian Church meant people were in absolute denial that sex abuse was happening in Church Institutions. In a more caring, generous Church the sex abuse scandal would not have needed to be solved in the way it was in a bare-it-all secular Royal Commission—and still isn't really solved as leading Church members and bishops fail to "get it" about showing care and compassion for those damaged by this behaviour instead of making excuses and laying blame for the demise of their champion [-]. The clerical model must be shut down. Otherwise the ordinary people—the heart and soul of the Catholic Church in Australia—must be allowed to lead the way in recreating their Church and living their faith unhindered by dictatorial leaders.

Patience, Optimism, Forward Thinking.

There's no doubt we're in challenging times and the Church is suffering because of it. As a Catholic, brought up in a devout Catholic family my faith has also been challenged. It is now though that 'we' the 'Church' must unite, stay strong for what we believe and be the beacon of hope instrumental for making the changes or in the least be part of the dialogue to making change possible. It's important to always ask 'What would Jesus do'? For me, I know he'd roll the sleeves up and continue to lead from the front. Be there for the needy, help those less fortunate, take risks for the common good and teach our kids it's ok to have an opinion. Treating others with respect and dignity is what God wants of all of us. Say no to violence or abuse, say no to incarceration of asylum seekers and stand up to those corrupting rights of others. If we all try to bring about a bit of peace and happiness in our homes and community we will go a long way to going what God is asking of us in Australia at this time.

I think that God is asking us—particularly the Hierarchical Church—to listen to the hearts, not just the heads, to the people who belong to it. God is asking us to listen to the voice of the marginalized and those who are disengaged with the Church.

I forgot to say things in my last submission. God is asking the Church to be more inclusive and transparent. Governance—must be examined honestly.

I think God is asking us two things: 1 personal holiness—is it possible that the Australian Church could do more to support personal spiritual growth? When our heart is right with God so will be our actions. 2. Love of all creation. I think we should be renounced for how we care for every person from birth to death and for the environment that we live in. Destroying the environment that supports us is the same as mass murder/suicide in my opinion.

I think that a large part of what upsets people about the Church these days is a sense of hypocrisy, or at least a lack of life lived authentically in the light of the Gospel. So I think that what God is asking of us is an honest, energetic attempt to live our lives, focussed upon the mission of the Church. To the extent that we know deep down that we suffer from the same outlook, we are stirred up by what we see as the hypocrisy of others.

God is wanting us to live full and Christian lives where we are reaching out to one another, supporting everyone as much as is humanly possible. It is necessary to move with the times and the state of the Catholic Church at the present time requires significant changes.

God is asking us to be a voice for and support the marginalised - Indigenous, poor, elderly, refugees, the vulnerable, GLBTI, disabled.... And to live by example and be visible as a Church in faith. To rebuild community and connect with not only parishioners but all those mentioned above, and more. To connect and value the sacredness of all relationships amongst all people—be it based on race, gender, age, faith, profession. Our liturgies need to be life giving. Homilies relatable and inspirational. To engage our youth in faith and life. God is asking us to seriously question those in leadership roles of our faith. God is asking us as we are all humans to allow leaders in our Church to develop personal life-giving relationships with appropriate partners. Our Catholic faith needs to include all, not EXCLUDE anyone at all. To accept that being human means diversitybecause everyone is different and diverse which doesn't mean that they don't have faith.

1) God is asking us to separate the man made institutions from Jesus' message of love and communion with other people. This can get easily side tracked when we are so used to focussing on rituals, rote learned prayers and man-made rules. 2) God is asking us to remember that the bad seeds reflect a small minority of the clergy and that we need to remember the vast majority of those who do God's work as it is intended to be done. 3) There is no escaping the fact that distancing the Catholic Church from the amount of power that it holds is a monumental task, but God is asking us in Australia to make this happen. 4) It is time the Catholic Church considers revisiting whether priests can marry as they are allowed to in the Orthodox Church. 5) Responsibilities fall unto priests in areas where they are not trained nor have any experience or specialism e.g. administration, budgeting, governance. In my view a priest's role is to offer spiritual guidance, pastoral care, theological knowledge, formation and evangelisation. As such

our priests are often being set up to fail. 6) The confidence we have in the clergy has been severely compromised. God is asking us how we can rebuild trust in the Catholic organisation.
<p>I feel God is asking of us to turn back to him with repentance and to seek his presence. Turning back to our first love. We need to establish a personal relationship with him by reading the Bible and in prayer. Go back and look at the way Jesus lived his life and follow him. Don't complicate the life of Jesus the people need to know the real Jesus who he is and His story, give people the 'Kerygma'. Then lead them into the baptism of the Holy Spirit so they can experience the full role of the Holy Spirit in their personal life. Jesus poured out his life for us all—it's time to give back and share the message about God Jn 3:16. This love is for every body and we need first to live it out in our Church, everybody is a child of God and we need to treat each other in that manner and respect. Jn 17:21 it's time we all became authentic Christians so the world can believe there is a God.</p> <p>We need a Church that is active and alive growing in the Holy Spirit, through Bible studies, prayer and building communities.</p>
<p>I think Christ is asking us to return to Him through repentance and intensified prayer and sacrifices. Parishes have lost their zeal and fruitfulness, so a return to faithful, informative preaching is key. Parishes need to form people intellectually more generally so that there is a coherent understanding of the depths and riches of the teachings of the Catholic faith. It is sad that most adults have a facile and stunted understanding the Catholic faith. Such an understanding has nothing compelling or credible about it. People should be educated to understand that being challenged, or made to feel uncomfortable in pursuit of spiritual and moral growth does not amount to 'being judged'. It should go without saying that a return to the spiritual treasures of the Church, such as Adoration, Gregorian chant, etc., should be implemented universally as our purposes as a Church are to 'seek first the Kingdom' of the next life. 'All these things', such as thriving communities, effective social services and missions, 'will be added'. parish community groups could take a leaf out of the Protestants and have them based on age and sex: https://enjoy.Church/au/ministries. Contraception must also be emphatically rejected from the life of parishioners, as it kills future communities and even future souls for the Kingdom. It reduces the energy of the most vital community—the family. Large families with 5+ children should be encouraged as the norm.</p>
Be an inclusive Church. Allow priests to marry if they choose to. Let women play a bigger part in our liturgy etc. Do not conceal our failings in the Church clergy or cover them up. This must now not be handled by clergy.
God is Love. This needs to be demonstrated. Therefore for the Church. To be honest, open, transparent and inclusive of all and become more relevant in today's society. To be available to minister for all. The laity must be listened and have more involvement in the decision making of the Church. The Church at present is in a broken state. Going forward change must occur.
I imagine that God would like to see a Church which represents its people, a repentant Church, a Church willing to surrender its power and privilege.

Compassion. Faithfulness to God and others. Outreach to the poor, ill, elderly, disabled, imprisoned and marginalised. Respect for, and communication with, other faiths. Lives lived according to gospel values. Relevance and vision; the gospel needs to be interpreted in relation to contemporary Australian lives. God wants us to take our faith outside of our churches and become visible forces for good in the community.

To lead with integrity and a sense of humanity. To unite the many 'parts' of the Church in truth and love. To bring together all people so they can learn from each other and take the Church forward. To continue the conversation with our Aboriginal Brothers and Sisters to ensure we have a uniquely Australian Church. To consider our place in the world and reflect on how we can fully embrace, support and care for all of God's people. To reflect on our relationship with creation and bring to life a new way that is centred on stewardship and equality. To continue to reflect on the role of Catholic schools in society and how they can best form students who are connected with the Catholic story and become witnesses of Jesus Christ.

The Church has to completely change. Open up the doors and windows and let the Spirit in. Be relevant in today's world. Repent of putting "the Church" and clerics above the people and children of God. Be a welcoming place. Stop treating adult Catholics as children and really value their voices. I have brought up my 7 adult children through the Church schools' sacraments etc. and only one attends a Church. She feels her needs are met at a Pentecostal Church. So perhaps our Church can learn from other denominations about ways of reaching the needs of young thinking adults who are disillusioned with the worldwide scandals of abuse and cover ups. I feel shame and anger at the Church. I believe in our God of love and pray for real change from the grassroots. Please really listen and act.

Collectively, we are the voice of God! The bishops MUST hear our voices, they MUST listen to what God is saying and they MUST act accordingly. I think God is asking us to get this message across, no matter what it takes.

1. The Church needs to change. Too many men!!! Give women more responsibility. Share the Church's wealth with poor/needy and abused. Take more responsibility with sexual abuse problems. Big payouts for the victims and for their psychological help. In the parish, too few people in parish organizations and we're burnt out. 2. We need to stay positive and support the clergy who are working so hard in our parishes. We are the Church. Our relationship with Jesus has not changed. Jesus will always be there for us.

Spend more time in prayer and practicing our faith. Try to live by the Ten Commandments. Take an active interest to learn and challenge the forces that are undermining the Catholic Church; these are not all external with many who call themselves "Catholic" wanting change to justify their own behaviour and lifestyle. In times gone by, many of these renegades broke away from the Catholic Church and formed a new Church with their followers; a lot of the present congregation of these new Churches may have been born into or their extended family have been part of their Church for decades if not centuries. They practice their religion with fervour, but do not recognize the Pope as head of their Church. Most of the disenchanted Catholics of today are the product of modern media; the idiot box (TV) in many rooms along with the soap box operas (serials) that they display; heavy metal music and the message conveyed along with the thumb twitching (social

media) and the instant update needed to survive. I have heard it said that in years gone by the fights that occurred because someone read another person's diary, now there is a fight if you don't follow their instance happenings on Facebook. Social media is also used to bully and intimidate others, especially the youth. Recent legislation supporting same sex marriage, euthanasia, abortion on demand up until birth and in some countries infanticide to kill the aborted baby that may have been born alive has been supported by many who call themselves Catholic. Much of this legislation is passed because too many so-called Catholics accept it as the norm. Having attended Sunday Mass in numerous European and Asian Churches along with many different parishes and dioceses in Australia I have formed the opinion that here in Australia we are too materialistic; the migrants make up most of those attending Sunday Masses in the Cities. I have seen the terminology "Diversity and Inclusiveness" used several years ago in the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in Victoria; they needed to have special appointments to oversee the implementation and then there is the celebration and associated publicity of their "coming out". I don't think that belonging to the LBGTIQA+ makes them any more qualified as firefighters or community leaders. We are all different and with privacy laws regarding marital status, the only time one would need to know is prior to contemplated marriage. While there may be concern over the lack of vocations and the shortage of priests within parishes, there can be some rationalization; there are many people who would travel hundreds of kilometres and pay significant amount for tickets to a music festival or sporting event. I appreciate the current participation of women as readers and special ministers at Mass and am aware that in some parishes they conduct a prayer service along with Communion where no priest is available to say Mass. We can always travel to Mass as we do for other events. We need to pray more.

Back to Basics—try to build closeness to God through proper prayer, sacrifice, talk more about God and not just a few people talking but real discussions within a group. More support for Catholics in the community and as a community in education, universities and business. Make a STRONG stance vocal and public on abortion, euthanasia, same sex marriage and the gender ideology that is contrary to Christ's teaching. Spread the simple truth that the Eucharist IS the body of Christ (this IS my body). Back to previous words in the Mass especially when consecrating the host "this is my blood that will be shed for ALL so sins may be forgiven". Promote greater love of Mary and the Rosary. Spread the messages of Lourdes/Fatima/Garabandal. Greater access to knowledge about the saints. More lay people involvement in discussions and organisation of the community with no stress. Greater care and responsibility for the welfare of children. Greater care and responsibility for the welfare of aged and infirmed. Discussions into 10 year commitment from religious. Discussions into women priests. Easier access to resources, i.e. help homeless, prayer groups. Emphasize family friendly. Open Vatican archives to everyone including digital copies of everything accessible on the web. Sharing the wealth—especially the poor. Accessibility to information, history of the Church, more transparency. Redesign sex education in Catholic schools—include spiritual and moral component. Speak openly about social matters and the Church's stance on these matters i.e. Abortion, Euthanasia. Child services are sadly lacking in our Church communities, i.e. play groups, parent groups, children friendly Mass. Jesus made a point more than once to specifically mention the treatment of children never turn them away, and kill yourself rather than harm a child. Preach the basics—Love One another as I have loved you. Admit the mistakes made in the past so we can address the issues as a community not just follows who

fall in line. The actions of the paedophiles in our Church have decimated the community spirit, ruined our wider standing in the world and destroyed trust in God. Bring those responsible to justice no matter who or how many, we must send a clear message that we will not allow the victims to go on suffering while their abusers are free. Make a statement. Make a stand.

- Families going through divorce, most importantly the children. Family divorce—support children and brief families how they can solve it
- Engage young and middle aged.
- Family violence—support, awareness and empowerment, its cause and effect of this in families.
- Mental illness—awareness, support and counselling for young people, suicide prevention.
- Migration—awareness, understanding asylum seekers and refugees.
- I think that we need to teach young people more deeply about God and our religion more thoroughly. This may make people more interested in going to church and make Mass more relevant and understandable. No connection between Mass and daily life. Mass times don't work for teenagers. Mass isn't relevant. Young people don't go to Mass. But their parents don't either. Middle aged people also disconnected. Masses that engage more people—children, students, music etc. Plain English—readings—adaption. Language of Mass is alienating.
- I do not believe in religion, I have never needed faith in anything or anyone. I have grown to think that none of the religions exist and it is just a way for people to stay blind to reality and have someone to blame things on besides themselves and I also think that it is a way for people to hide how they really feel, because they think it is against their "God" and what they stand for and I think it was a way to stop some people doing natural things or eating certain foods
- Abuse of children—lack of trust—wear the shame.
- Move on—relevant—catch up with times—leadership.
- Restrictive—prevents people from speaking their mind. Needs to be respectful of different views.
- LGBTIQ—wrong attitude. Gender equality in Church. Be welcoming. Married priests. Role of women. Parish/church be more inclusive. Priests being allowed to marry (Man-made law, not God's law). If they have a family may better understand youth. Currently too exclusive. Respect differences.
- Focus on Social Justice, care for aged, environment, unemployment, substance abuse and homelessness. "Church needs to reach out to people"
- Right of schools to employ Catholic staff should be upheld
- Difference in messages from Church and Society hard for young people
- Appeal to young people "casual Christians" connect to where they are, not expect them to go to the church.

Gender equality within the Church across all genders. Opening of priesthood to all the faithful. Dismantling of the clericalism which has diseased our Church. Replacement of the alienating language of the Mass with plain English. Full communion of divorced and remarried faithful. Finding another way for youth to 'be Catholic'. The Sunday Mass definition doesn't work. Moving on regarding attitudes to sex outside of marriage and contraception. Nobody is taking notice anyway. Being the human face of God in our world, particularly in the area of social justice. Stop the 'transplantation' of overseas priests who do not have the cultural competence to minister to their people. Let the people lead the people. Be Church through education, health, social justice, earth care. Clergy needs to be fully representative of all God's people. At the moment it is not. There are many roles that laity could hold in senior Church leadership that do not have to be held by priests: liturgy, finance, etc. I suspect that we are too late to try to re-engage youth. It seems to me they have little or no interest in the institutional Church. Nor do their parents. The disconnect is now intergenerational. They do however engage spiritually and through education, social justice

and community service. We need to re-define what it means to be Catholic and focus on what we do well. If we look at the demographic of priests and Mass attendees, the 'Sunday Church' will be dead and buried in less than 15 years. I suspect the plenary council is too little, too late.

Please provide as many opportunities for God's people to encounter Jesus personally, revealed through the Holy Spirit. This will increase faith. When the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus, this is not something you easily forget and it draws you deeper into the heart of the Trinity, with a desire to follow Jesus all the days of your life. It is the only way I can explain the radical transformation of the focus of my life. I have been following Jesus for nearly 10 years now and I have rarely had a moment that Jesus isn't the answer for EVERYTHING.

I think God is asking us to be open to a having a Church that is open to the changes in society today, to look at how we can make Church more about living out the Gospel in a modern world. We need to move beyond a Church that is catering to a small few.

I believe that God is asking us what do we need to do to change the Church in Australia to make it more inclusive of everyone. In light of the what has come out of the Royal Commission in to the abuse of children and more recently the jailing of Pell, what radical changes do we need to make to make the Church more relevant to modern society so that it fits in.

The most important thing that I believe God is asking of us in Australia at this time is that we remain focused on the main goal of the Church, which is to lead people toward Jesus, and to make saints. People are in desperate need of meaning and purpose in the current culture and the Church needs to offer them that. In addition to directing people to toward Jesus, the sacraments, spiritual direction etc., I also believe the Church in Australia needs to be much more involved in helping people who have mental health problems. For many years the Church has not provided a solid foundation in the faith that would help people navigate the stormy waters of the current culture. Instead of offering an alternative, the Church has instead been influenced by the predominant culture. This can be seen in the way that some within the Church, both religious and lay people, side with the culture on issues of morality. It can also be seen in the abuse crisis, both the abusers and those who enabled them. Many within the Church have lost the sense of sin and its consequences. Providing a solid foundation in the faith means providing better preparation for the sacraments, including instruction for parents. We now have generations of Catholics who don't know their faith and therefore cannot hand it on to their children. For many years Catholic schools have been watering-down Catholic teachings in order to not 'offend' non-Catholic students and teachers. Children and young people, and adults who lacked instruction in the faith while young, need better catechesis and sacramental preparation. They need to know what the Church believes and why. Children, and all Catholics, need to be taught the stories of the saints and martyrs. The feast days of the saints should be celebrated much more within the Church, especially within Catholic schools. The stories of the saints bear witness to the teachings of the Church and give children goals to aim for in their own lives. Devotions, such as the Rosary, should be actively encouraged rather than portrayed as optional extras. The Church in Australia does not need to change to encourage people to join. We need to stand out in the culture rather than blend in. A quote attributed to Archbishop Fulton Sheen states "People are turning away from Christianity today, not because it is too hard, but because it is too soft." Trying to make the Church blend into the culture by watering down any possibly uncomfortable teachings, and making

everything appear easy, will only turn more people away. The teachings of the Church are simple, and they for our own good, whether we feel comfortable with them or not. We need to value the beauty, symbolism and age-old traditions of our Church. This would help our Church to evangelise in this modern culture that lacks truth, meaning and beauty. (This is a summary—more information in the additional file submitted)

Haven't heard God speak.

Submission by [-] Catholic parish, [-]—Working Group

Submission 1. That the Church deepens the spirit of humility in the clergy and laity, so that:

- the actions of the clergy are characterised by accountability, transparency and good governance.
- their attitude is free of clericalism (defined as “a policy of maintaining or increasing the power of a religious hierarchy”).
- they are willing to accept help and support where needed (e.g., in the case of physical/mental health problems).
- they feel able to loosen their need to control and allow the Holy Spirit to work in the Church.
- the laity are willing to learn more about the beauty of our faith and become people of hope and courage who love one another.

Submission 2. That priests and their parish communities should relate and work together more closely by:

- promoting consultation (by a variety of means including effective pastoral councils), in which both strive to listen and hear each other;
- seeking out and drawing on the talents and abilities of people within the parish community.
- presenting the Gospel in a relevant way and in a language that people understand.

Submission 3 That priests and parish communities respond to God's loving gift of faith by:

- nourishing the gift of faith in each person through spiritual formation.
- expressing and recognising faith in daily life and through involvement in the community.
- acknowledging and reaching out to the faith that continues to live in those who have drifted away from parish communities.
- working more closely with other Christian communities.

To listen to the Holy Spirit. What tools did the Holy Spirit give us to build the Body of Christ at the beginning of the Church? Charisms. Yet in preparation for sacraments the Old Testament gifts are taught from Isaiah, the fruits of the Holy Spirit are taught from Gal 5. How can people have an expectant faith to operate in the power gifts when they are not taught to expect them? There is, in my opinion a big divide between the sacraments and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are not just for a few Mystics these are granted so each one of us can be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. To be able to evangelise. We see our churches full during the Sacramental programs but empty out again the following week. Something is wrong with these programs.

God is asking the same thing he has always asked. He does not change. The commandments have not changed. The rules of the Church have not changed. We should return to the basics of the Faith.

This input is developed from a group of yr 9 students in the [-] diocese. The student's main focus is on being engaged with Church. How can they become part of a church that is not what they consider interesting or enjoyable to be part of? Many are seeking more information and would like to learn more about Jesus, however, find the Mass both confusing and difficult to understand. They want the Church to be more relevant to them and for them.

1. God is always asking of us to know him and his ways through his word in the Bible. 2. He wants us to be open to a personal relationship with Jesus through his Holy Spirit. 3. Open our hearts to J. and the H. Spirit will flood in and his equip people with the strength of his gifts to sustain the Church; people do not know this; the Church MUST teach the people or it will die. People are STARVING for want of knowledge of HOW to reach God.

I don't think we can know what the Holy Spirit is saying. We are not prophets. What you will get in response to this question is an outpouring of everybody's personal /political opinions on the Church—half of them at odds with the other half—and which of those views are in accord with the Holy Spirit and which against will be difficult to tell. What we can identify objectively are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and these are the best indication of what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. Let the Church ask itself honestly: • To which communities are young people going to seek support for their faith? • Which communities are forming young people who continue to practice their Catholic faith once they leave school? • Which communities are producing the majority of vocations to the priesthood and religious life? • Which communities continue to adhere openly to the teaching of the Catholic Church in its entirety, as presented in the Catholic Catechism? • At which communities can you find the complete range of ages—babies, children, young adults, middle aged people and the elderly—rather than a very limited age range of people mainly in their sixties to eighties? • Which religious orders are growing, thriving and receiving many young vocations? The answer to all these questions is the communities who attend the Traditional Mass, now formally known as the Extraordinary Rite. Priests who offer these Masses often also offer the Ordinary Rite, so their chief characteristic is not that they are open to or attracted to the Traditional Rite but that they are men of deep faith and courage who openly and unashamedly present the whole faith and life of the Church to their communities. Likewise, the people and religious orders who attend have both sought out and seek to create a community characterised by a full faith, without the spirit of political, theological or moral dissent common in most parishes. This strength and love for the Church in both priest and people attracts and inspires young people, bringing about conversions, vocations and growing communities, in contrast to the diminishing numbers common in most parishes in Australia. There are other communities here and there in Australia, such as some of the charismatic communities or parish communities led by strong priests of deep faith, who also show these features. But the pattern is most marked in the Traditional Mass communities. In all these cases, the Holy Spirit is speaking with great clarity through the fruits He produces. While it would be ideal to have a Mass in the Extraordinary Rite available in any parish of reasonable size, I am not suggesting that this Mass should be imposed anywhere or the Ordinary Rite removed. Rather, I am simply pointing to the quite evident fruit that is blooming in and from these communities and suggesting that you encourage and support them, as the future of the Catholic Church in Australia probably lies in these communities.

I believe God is telling us not to fear him but rather to embrace him. In last week's responsorial psalm church [-], the response was 'God takes pity on those who fear HIM' or similar words. It makes me cringe to hear such negative sentiment. In my view this kind of sentiment drives people away from the Catholic Church rather than encouraging people in a loving environment. Such

responses to the prayers during Mass should be vetted and re-worded to encompass love and encouragement rather than fear of loathing of God/Jesus.

To keep the Faith—we have a Church community in which a significant number openly disagree with the teachings of the Church, and live accordingly. This is far from ideal. We need priests who are prepared to reiterate the teachings of the Church to their congregations on a more regular basis, without fear of offending people or losing parishioners. This requires all PRIESTS to believe in the teachings of the Church. It is not being conservative to believe in our teachings, it is simply being Catholic. To engage with the world and not be afraid to proclaim our Faith—We won't get many converts by just waiting for people to come to us, particularly in Australia, where many people are shy about being labelled 'religious'. Our society continues to drift further from the teachings of the Church, to the point where to say that we are even nominally living in a Christian country is no longer true. The advantage of this situation is that the Church has something distinctly different to give to those who are disillusioned with what secular society has to offer (the disadvantage is that persecution of the Church is definitely on the agenda). Thus, when we engage with the world we should be open to listening to people and trying to understand why they live differently to Christ's teachings, and/or understanding of their different interpretations. However, we should not compromise on believing that the teachings of the Church are correct, and that they work for everyone. We need to believe that the Church IS relevant to the world, it does not need to MAKE itself relevant to the world. What it does need to do is become more active and effective at getting what it has to say to the world across. I don't mean that we need to preach on street corners, rather we need to advertise clear pathways for those who are curious about Catholicism to find out more. e.g. regular Q and A sessions in parishes. Marriage is a particular opportunity of promoting our difference with society. Marriage preparation courses which promote the uniqueness of Catholic marriage would be a good way to reach interested young people. "Catholic Marriage. Marriage with Meaning". No doubt the forces of social 'progress' will mock our efforts, indeed will be outraged by them. We needn't worry about this, it is only likely to increase the number of people who are interested. The sacraments—must be administered correctly i.e. more careful observance of the rules governing Communion. The Church should make it very clear that it will not cooperate with persecution of the Church via state interference in the Sacrament of Penance. Latin Mass—these communities appear to be successful at getting young people into the Church and producing vocations. Their growth should be encouraged by the Church.

For restitution, compensation and support of sexual abuse victims. Sunday's gospel spoke of seeing the splinters (in us) and not seeing the plank in (the bishop's) eye. The Church needs to re-distribute its wealth to the poor. We need equality for all people—women priests, married clergy, and better vetting of the seminarians. The mission of the Church should be to support those in need.

I'm not sure what God is asking, probably to hang in there! So many good people are involved in the Catholic Church and it's devastating to having such a terrible brush tarring the whole Catholic community. The whole Pell debacle leaves a sour taste in my mouth. My kids are at a Catholic school, I'm involved in a few things in the Church, but this whole incident has me feeling lost.

I believe our religious education in both Catholic and state schools is insufficient. There are many people these days who have done theological studies and are willing and able to help fill this gap in both primary and secondary levels. I truly believe this is why so many young people leave the Church. They prepared for the sacraments when very young and the true meaning and value of their faith is not absorbed. Through obvious lack of priests and nuns to serve in this capacity, we need to go to the laity for help. We are part of this royal priesthood (1Ptr 2:9). I feel God is asking Australia to take the lead in this field and use the laity. I also believe we do not have sufficient deacons to help in our parishes. Is there a significant reason why we can't have female deacons? If not, where are they? Our diocese [-] does not have deacons (I am aware of) and I know there are many young men (and women, no doubt) who are willing and able to fill this role. May God bless and guide the council in their decisions.

I think God is asking us to reflect, think and act in a way that our past Saints and Jesus lived. We have become too obsessed in the greed of the world and are forgetting the people, or even despising the people that are down and out-the drug addicts, the homeless, the people who are living not according to our middle class values. We the Church are choosing not to look, not to help.

Dear Sir/ Madam I have been thinking and praying about this council for weeks. I did know about Cardinal Pell's conviction some time ago so it was not a sudden surprise for me. At Mass in [-] on Saturday I think it seemed like we had lost our way somehow. In my opinion, God is asking the Church to be more open, closer to society generally and that means Canon Law must not prevail over the law of the land. Most priests are good people but maybe there should be some opening up of lay people in the administration of the Church? In particular, more women should hold some power there. We cannot go back to the past ages even if we want to. The general public is more educated now; well aware of their rights as they should be. Those who hold power in the Church would do well to take this into consideration in planning the future. I hope you will not take this amiss and that God will guide you in your deliberations. [-] a member of [-] Catholic parish.

A parishioner gave me an excerpt of Greg Sheridan's book GOD IS GOOD FOR LIFE, pages 330 - 339, and asked that I submit it on their behalf as their response to the question. I trust you will have access to this book.

The events of the past months (or years) have horrified and shocked the Catholic people, and now we are asked to have our say. It is like standing beside the embers of our home and being asked how the fire could have been avoided! Particularly relevant is the fact that our opinions in the past have been so carefully ignored. What amazes people most is the fact that the hierarchy have maintained its intransigence and ignored the fact that many people have been calling for changes in our Churches for years. But maybe this is due to the fact that our Church, my Church, has been ignoring the opinions of more than half the population for as long as I can remember. Surely some of the cardinals, at least, can see the injustices done to women over many years and the talents which could have been used, and were lost. This didn't just happen in the last months, or years, for that matter. We know that in the USA women have been ordained into the priesthood by a bishop (or bishops). This, of course has not been accepted by the hierarchy but then, women have had to fight for their rights always. If they hadn't stood up for themselves would we even have the right to vote? By excluding women from important decision making processes, the Church is doing

an injustice to itself and also it tells women that their ideas don't matter. Why on earth are they being educated then? Maybe a lot of the terrible things that are happening now could have been avoided if there had been more women in the vicinity of the church and parish house. They could be either wives of priests or priests themselves. Women, by their very nature would find it difficult to know of such things being perpetrated against children and to do nothing about it. The person or people responsible would have been brought to justice much sooner than they were. By excluding women from these roles the Church is missing out on steady and empathetic opinions which, in turn, would bring the balance necessary in all sections of society. As things stand, we have lost several generations of children and adults because the people in power are so resistant to change. Ordinary members of the congregation are feeling betrayed and even guilty even though the terrible events have nothing to do with them. Maybe people should have been more strident in speaking up; which would probably have meant their excommunication!! Now I have put my thoughts and opinions to paper and I hope they will be read with full consideration. If my opinions are similar to many others then surely it is way past time for change and personally I would like to see it acted on NOW so that the Church will be left with some shreds of dignity. Thank you for allowing me to share my opinions,

[-]

That the Church returns to its grassroots origins and the hierarchical structure is broken to give full voice to the laity, especially women. That the ordination of priests is reviewed to ensure only the most appropriate are ordained. Those who are conservative and backward looking must be rejected. Enforced celibacy must be done away with and married and female clergy become the norm. Symbols of power through vestments, props and position must be abandoned. Rules and regulations must be abandoned to make way for a truly inclusive and welcoming Church with its doors wide open. Celebrations must reflect this openness, and be relevant and inclusive and joyful rather than ritualistic and solemn. Archaic regulations that exclude people based on marital status must be rejected. Archaic regulations that exclude people based on sexuality must be rejected. Gay marriage must be celebrated. Parishes be given autonomy and support from bishops rather than control. Parishes be given the right to manage their own finances if they have the qualified personnel to do so rather than be hamstrung by the diocese.

1 The number of women actively attending Mass and involved in ministries is quite evident. There is a need to be more inclusive of women in decision making roles and more actively as deacons. 2 The 3rd rite of reconciliation brought people in large numbers to this sacred sacrament; this engaged many, therefore we need to see this rite restored. 3 A freedom for priests to marry or not, as they understand themselves to be called. 4 We recommend that women be admitted to the priesthood, single or married, as discerned. 5 Could priests who have left the priesthood and married be invited back into the priesthood as their gifts are often presently lost to the Church (e.g. Anglican married priests are accepted into the Church). 6 "Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God".

God is possibly asking us to seek forgiveness and calling us to follow him in the way that Jesus taught us. To Love one another as he loves us. With all that is happening in our Church at the moment, God may be showing us that there needs to be change. Highlighting that all men are flawed and not beyond sin. We are all equal in the eyes of God and that we all need to devote

ourselves to God. Perhaps it is time to change and allow for married priests and women to be ordained. We are all equal. Jesus walked among the people and related to the people of the time. Considering that, almost everywhere, the younger generation is missing from our Church, perhaps it is time to move among the people and connect the Church more fully to the community. Bring the teaching of Jesus to the people rather than wait for them to come to the Church. Make the Church more open, more welcoming and encourage a greater sense of community for all.

This submission is made on behalf of a prisoner, who left a handwritten statement in the drop box of the parish church. The submission simply states, "Allow priests to marry".

* I believe God asks us: 1. What is our vision as Church in Australia (as community of faithful with a mission from Christ) 2. What does it mean to be a people of faith in a secular country? It is more than just coming to a particular parish, or celebrating the sacraments, or being engaged in the Church's ministries. It is to be a missionary of Christ and the gospel. The question is: How would this look like if we translate this in Australian context? 3. The Church is more on the mission than just maintenance, more on Charism than just being part of a community. How can we help nurture the charism of each member regardless of age, skin, language, talent, background and status?

God is asking us to be more attentive to the poor of the world and the ills of the world. He is asking me to be more involved in direct activity and for us to listen. He wants the Church to include lay persons in the operations of the Church as well as community activity. The Catholic Church has to change to a community church not a parish or diocesan church. The leadership of the Church has failed either directly or indirectly in the protection of children and the faith. There must be change and this change must be led by people who would be no afford of change. The mere structure of the Plenary council tips the decision making on to those who have failed us in the past. Many of the proffers in the Bible were not accepted by the church of the day. The past history of the Roman Catholic Church is not good when including the community. Women have an equal role in our Church and must be included in the hierarchal decisions. God is asking the Church to release the priests from their vow of celibacy to know a family life and have a personal support in life.

Go back to the beginning of the Church, the first Pentecost, the birth of the Church. There appears to be an imbalance between the sacraments and the gifts given by of the Holy spirit to empower the Church. In preparation for 5th Sacraments candidates are taught the Gifts of the Holy Spirit from Isaiah 11 that are for our own edification and the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5. It seems to me that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, given at Pentecost, gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are glossed over, yet these are the gifts given that empower the Church. Thus people do not expect these gifts don't know they are still relevant today and don't expect their own personal Pentecost. God is asking many things of us in Australia, mostly to live a good life, helping and looking after others who may be not as fortunate as we are. This is a matter of judgement, and is a very, very complex question, and if we are to try and actually do something practical on a Church scale we must be ready to battle the many levels of bureaucracy that is the Church today. To contribute to what I believe to be the most urgent and important we think of how our Church operates in my lifetime. Maybe in the history of Christianity. Trust and belief have been destroyed by lack of willingness to modernise and by recent child sexual abuse and cover-ups. To reflect on

how we can transform our Church communities, organisations and leadership teams. To acknowledge our shortcomings and transgressions both past and continuing as [we] seek forgiveness from God and those we have hurt. To celebrate the world, our place in it and how God enriches us through it and our participation in it. To make a committed surrender to Jesus so that the Holy Spirit is able to form a person relationship with Jesus and us individually. This relationship then leads us to a hunger to know His word—this is amazing happening!! For the Churches to lead us in a knowledge and understanding of the New Testament. Who are “us”? Who is included? Regular Mass-goers? Lapsed Catholics including the hurt, the disaffected, the disappointed and the disillusioned? What of people of other faith traditions or none? I believe God is saying “Find me in all these places, peoples, and cultures within the overall Australian culture—Listen to what the Holy Spirit is speaking through them. Jesus Christ in his teaching and life had offered people authentic, relevant and encouraging words—he addressed the issues of the people and as shepherd servant, gave direction and hope. I think the Australian Catholic Church must continue his work, direction and compassion. To make genuine efforts to challenge the culture of consumerism, individualism and suppression by its courageous teachings, outreach and acceptance of the marginalised.

God is asking us to break away from the worldly power and respect, to be willing to be scorned and mocked by the world again, to surrender our influence and institutions if that what it costs, and to return to the Gospel and the teachings of Christ; the real teachings of Christ contained in the Gospels and preserved through the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, founded by Jesus Christ. The current social and cultural climate we are dealing with is filled with immorality and humanist pride, and the terrible suffering and sadness this produces is plain to see. Every time we try to compromise with the world or soften the Gospel, we obscure Christ's teachings and power, and instead of sharing Christ's healing truth, we are infected by the world's poisonous lies. Trying to evangelise by pretending Christianity is compatible with worldliness has failed totally. Our Lord taught that if we were faithful we would be hated by the world, but not to fear, because he has conquered it. We need to be a fearless Church united with Christ.

Summary of the History of the sacramental form of Penance used across the ages 1. Early centuries: Public Penance at Easter Time/ Lent probably once in a lifetime. 2. With the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe, the Irish monks moved across Europe in the centuries known as the Dark Ages. With them came the individual, one on one form of Confession that was adopted by the Western Church or Latin Rite. This would be connected to increasing numbers of priests available. 3. Since Vatican II there were three rites offered: a) The traditional one on one confession for the Sacrament of Penance which in recent years has seen a declining attendance. b) The Second Rite of Penance which allowed a communal prayer introduction, reflection and preparation, followed by one on one confession usually with the availability of several priests as numbers present demanded. c) The Third Rite of Penance. When this form of penance was available to parishes attendance was high—churches were full. It was obviously a well-liked form of Penance because it removed the nervousness felt by so many going to one on one or the First Rite of Penance. This removes the individual counselling a priest may offer a penitent but if the Third Rite is presented well this would be covered.

I think God is calling us to consider: How to be more inclusive, how to make Mass and the Eucharist more accessible, how to make reconciliation more regularly available and accessible, how to increase the people's sense of the sacredness of their role (not only the priest) and empower them to act, how to dismantle patriarchal power practices and structures that are not essential and to provide a more empowered role for women as leaders and protectors of the vulnerable. I have been a practising, faithful member of the Catholic Church most of my life. In that time I have never seen a nun taking their vows or celebrated in the same way that we seem to venerate priests. Sometimes this culture creates a lack of acknowledging the role of 'service' and 'humility' in PRACTICE (not just words). Where are the empowered female role models for my daughter to observe and model her Christian identity on (that draw attention not only to the virginal and youthful qualities of Mary but also her adventurousness, her presence as leader, even at an older age, guide to the disciples, for example). Something also needs to change with the way that the Church is physically arranged. When my son was 3 or 4 he came out of Church and said to the priest 'Are you God?' as it appeared to him that everyone was worshipping this man who was standing up the front in a power role. Even though we know that's not true, actually in some way this idea is subtly embedded. Although I treasure many rituals of the Catholic Church I think we need to reconsider those that highlight and privilege males. There needs to be much greater transparency and sharing of power. We need to make it easier for someone who's not been to Church for years to come in and access reconciliation and not need to be 'in the know' about confession times at that particular congregation (what occurs might be different from what is advertised on an outdated version of the service times online—we need to be more tech savvy and up to date across the board). We need to see more of a true reflection of the diverse cultures that attend Mass, particularly through the music and languages used. Priests need more experience in dealing with people, especially before they are allowed to hear confession. Many times I have been given advice from a well-meaning but young and inexperienced priest who has not grasped the depth of the situations and experiences I am talking about as a mature woman. Misunderstanding can also occur with older priests who take into the confessional a particular view of women and women's role that reflects a generational view that is much more closed than the actual view of the Church. I have also had some experiences of wonderful confessors, but they are in the minority, and seem to have a particular gift in this area. This is not the case for every priest. It needs to be easier to engage in charity works through each Church community. Thank you.

Being a faith community. Engaged in the gospel. To move away from hierarchy to community participation and for a more professional approach to faith engagement than the old style way we have relied upon in recent times. Masses are particularly flat in tone, devoid of emotion, long and of the same flavour. This creates an environment where there is little attachment, limited reason people see to attend to connect with God and our faith community at weekly Mass. The small number of families and young people attending do so out of pure commitment rather than yearning to go. This is not a healthy interaction. When our family goes to church we are on our own, it is not our demographic. We are like albinos in the room, we stand out, it is uncomfortable. There are few people with whom we can connect. Is this community? There is limited intellectual stimulation, yet there is a lot of talk about abuse. This type of church is not a happy environment

for families. It is focused on sex. Can we please build more of a culture of engagement and joy about our faith?

What are you doing to engage our young people in the practice of their faith?

We are going to have to take more time to spread his word in a very pagan world.

I believe he is asking me to be honest, to be challenging, to be forthright and to say it as I see it in my life.

God is asking me to go out of my comfort zone in this application to the PC. I have been a staunch, church-attending Catholic from the date of my birth. I have married a Catholic woman and we attend Mass every Sunday, and I have been the Chair of my parish PPC for the last 6 years, standing down from the position late in 2018, but still a member of the PPC. We have 2 grown sons aged 33 and 31, the elder of the 2 attends Mass with us on a regular basis, but the younger one has all but given away his faith, due to what he sees as the hypocritical, non-caring attitude of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church to matters such as the cover up of the child sex saga that has been allowed to prosper in secrecy over the last 40 to 50 years, and secondly, the attitude of the Catholic Church in Australia to the gay community. Our son came out as a gay male 6 years ago. I am struggling to maintain a strong faith in the face of these issues myself, firstly with my conflicting emotions between upholding the teachings of the Church and the risk of losing my son over gay issues, and more recently the culmination of the court decision to find Cardinal Pell guilty of child sex charges. My feelings right now are that the Catholic Church around the world, and especially in Australia, has barely even paid lip service to the atrocities committed by the clergy, and the only thing the world is seeing is a cover-up from the Pope down—protecting the perpetrators through an 'old boys' club', with the solution being to simply move the men to other parishes.

We need to look at new models of doing church. We need to change the way we raise money. We need to provide more opportunities for all people to contribute to the life of the Church. We need to consider married and women priests or find ways that lay people can be leaders. In [-], Fr [-] and a few families met monthly to share a meal in the parish hall. No theology. No religion. Just community building. From this grew an amazing Children's Liturgy team—running 3 groups at the 8:30 Mass (0-5 years, 6-10 year, 11-14 years) and another group at the 10:30 Mass. This is a wonderful way to include these kids in the liturgy and present the gospel at their level. Also a music ministry at the 8:30 Mass has grown out of this group. The Sacramental Team is run by people who attended this group. The Charismatic prayer group is also run by a lady who attended with her family. This was a simple model of community building that is having long term benefits for the parish of [-].

To consider how we can best use the resources we have on hand in our unique parishes, to maximise our efforts by empowering parishioners and taking pressure off our priests. To re-engage our youth and prepare for a church that looks and sounds different to that of the past but still holds true to the values and morals Christ instilled in his disciples. To allow for greater freedom between parishes to create a church that meets the needs the community and strives to be part of the community. To meet the needs of our world where they are at for each individual parish, ask and find out what this needs are and then actively take steps to put into place action

plans to tackle and address these needs. To speak to our community and not at the community, that language must be accessible and enlivening for all, people must want to go to Mass to be filled, not to just tick a box out of obligation. To work with our Catholic schools so that they are not just Catholic in name but once again Catholic in nature, through staff engagement as well so that all are on the same page. That the schools be an effective form of evangelisation to empower young people in their faith journey. That we look beyond the past to find new ways of leadership that invite different perspectives in order to really speak to each aspect of our parish, married priests who can speak with families and understand their challenges, know the difficulties and love of children and the commitment of the sacrament of marriage, who understand and know that this ministry is vocation more than career and that their work God's work as so many families would step into this role instantly for God's Church if this were currently available.

To teach the faith. I believe that both practising Catholics and lapsed Catholics would greatly benefit if we knew more about what we believe and teach and hold as Catholics. Both in our parish prayer groups and in the public in general there is great ignorance of Catholic doctrine and belief and this is a great deficit in our community.

1. I feel God is calling us to listen to each other and work together. 2. To be strong in faith. 3. For people to have a voice in the Church, to be heard. 4. To go back to the basics 'teachings of Christ'. 5. Reverence in the Church. 6. Practice more devotions. 7. Focus on God and reconciliation, being more in-tune with God. 8. Anti-religion/ government. 9. Get rid of mixed marriages and same sex marriage. 10. Church officials get off their ivory towers and get in-touch with the people. 11. Need to visit the sick, disabled and the old. 12. [-] 15yrs old accepting Jesus and the way we accept Jesus is to be ready for his second coming. Accepting hardships and sufferings, through the sufferings I see how Jesus works and there for I can accept him. 13. Unite strongly with our leader the Pope, follow the gospel, prayer, prayer, and prayer including the rosary, continue to be encouraged to go to confession regularly. Our young people—more involvement needed. Catholic involvement in the community generally. Sense of obligation missing God tells me to love one another and make peace I like the openness of the Plenary Council to be able to say what we think. All the man-made rules I don't like.—Australia is in big trouble, spiritually and politically—More reverence to the Blessed Sacrament—No talking aloud inside church—God's Temple—Encouragement and more practice of devotions—Sing more liturgical hymns—Priests to talk more about confession and practice of Communion—Expedition and Benediction throughout the year—More encouragement of prayer and fasting. More practice of the above will build goodness and holiness in our hearts. Only then can we go with God to others to do good etc. Only then can we fix my first sentence.

That the ACBC request the Pope to change Canon Law so that there is JUST representation at PC (voting rights also). As it is now it is disrespectful to (lay) who are the Church. We plead for a Church that is accountable, transparent (cut the secrecy), inclusive, consultative, prayerful and humble. Cultural Change is needed and sadly our ACBC is not capable of this. Experts who do cultural change need to be called in to advise and work at all levels with us (for bishops to try to do cultural change is an impossibility). We need diocesan processes which are transparent, accountable, respectful and consultative and inclusive. We need to have a Diocesan Pastoral Council, we need a Diocesan Pastoral Plan. We need a more appropriate way of MINISTRY.

Importing priests from other cultures does not allow for lay leadership models to be explored. Also from many perspectives importing priests is not the solution to pastoral ministry to all. Many people feel extremely let down by their church. Bishops need to be 'walking with' people. Writing letters, publishing articles is a poor substitute for engaging with people in the pews and those (many) who have walked away. One group [Advent/Plenary] commented that 'we needed to be nourished, nurtured through this difficult time(shocking abuse) not just left to our own devices.....our Rock has been shattered and the bishops don't seem to care'. We need a very different kind of Church.....this one is not working. Leadership at all levels must take greater responsibility and create pathways towards reaching out to those disaffected from the Church. It seems that the next generation in our diocese does not need the Church.....it feels like we have become irrelevant. I feel extremely sad about this because I do not hang in there because of the institutional Church but because of Jesus. Seems to me that our structures and process 'have lost The Way.' We sometimes get the impression that bishops are the 'upper class' of our Church. Not all bishops. There are some like [-] who lives with the life of 'Gaudium et Spes' in his heart...."the joy and the hope, the grief and the anguish of the men and women of our time.....Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts". Today's Church must reflect JUST and FAIR processes of having women ministering at every level. Women must be present and part of discernment processes which determine future directions for our Church. Money/Resources towards PASTORAL CARE....genuine help for the many in our Church who in spite of the wonderful work of St Vincent de Paul S.....remain on the margins. Senior people in our church remain mostly 'alone with their own devices to survive'. They are rarely targeted to seek advice and wisdom and guidance. These older people have weathered the storms of life, they have wisdom often surprising and they can often 'see through' harebrained ideas that go nowhere. People in Nursing Homes, Aged Care ... to be continued....

I think God is asking us to do what has always been asked. Through Jesus in the gospels, in the catechism of the Catholic Church and through His blessed Mother Mary at Fatima. Pray, repent of our sins, do penance and love our neighbour. I think the Church in Australia, and certainly my own parish, has become too worldly. It has become just another political party. Most homilies these days are all about popular social justice issues such as climate change, immigration, racism, etc. I think what God is asking for is more focus on sin. Not the social sins of the nation, but personal sin.

I have given this question much prayer and personal reflection over time. I sense that God is calling us to empower the laity more in the Church in Australia. In my own experience in the diocese of [-], I am concerned about how we will preserve parishes and smaller faith communities within those parishes with the decreased amount of priests. I have been a Youth Ministry coordinator in the diocese for 3 years and for the past four years have been studying for the priesthood in the diocese. Over the past seven years, I have spoken with many priests, religious and lay people within the diocese. I have sensed a very positive and overwhelming desire for more involvement of the laity within our Church. In our diocese there are 40 parishes and 85 Churches in total. During my seven years in ministry across the diocese, I have had contact with each of these parishes and visited most of them, including some of the smaller Churches in these parishes. Each of these communities is unique and has a strong history of faith, worship,

community and outreach. In each place I have encountered people for whom without this faith community, they would be without a church to worship in. Many of our parishes or church outposts are remote and may be more than 30 minutes away from the nearest Mass centre. The need to reach out to each of these communities is a challenging one. This is particularly so given that we have only 33 active priests. While this number for now looks quite good all things considered, there are concerns. 10 of these priests are 70 or older and are looking after 13 parishes between them, including two 91-year-old priests who celebrate Mass each Sunday in [-] and [-]. There are then 7 priests working across 7 parishes who are on loan to our diocese for a period of time. Then, we have at least one priest who has serious health challenges and is the pastor of two parishes. In the 60-70 age bracket we currently have 10 priests. These statistics highlight the pastoral challenges we face in caring our parish communities into the future. While our priority is obviously to encourage vocations to the priesthood, we also need to be realistic. At the moment, we have only five seminarians for the diocese. This is not enough to replace those who will retire in the next five years, let alone the next 10-15 years. While it is an option to recruit priests from overseas, this has its challenges. If we are to recruit priests from overseas, we need to give them an opportunity to enculturate and study in Australia first, ideally as a seminarian. Where this has happened, we have seen great fruits in our diocese and have been blessed with great pastors for our parishes, who are in love with Jesus and connect well with people. When priests have been appointed to parishes straight from overseas, however, there have often been many difficulties. In these parishes, I have seen less numbers at Mass and a poor morale among active parishioners.

I think God is asking all Catholics to be attentive to the call of the Gospel and to the inspiring and challenging leadership of Pope Francis. We need a variety of regular forums to bring together all those who are baptized from cardinals to youngsters so we can remind ourselves of what is of the essence of our faith and plan how our communities can be invigorated and reach out to those who need us. I think God would want those in leadership to listen very carefully to the voice of the people and to treat their concerns and hopes and questions with dignity and honesty. I believe that unless we immediately give lay women and men their rightful place in decision making in our Church we will be a severely diminished institution.

To care for our communities, our environment and ourselves with a compassionate heart and a pure mind.

1. God is asking the Church to be more inclusive in light of the current response to sexual abuse. 2. That the Church be more focused on what is going on in community and be more involved at that level. 3. God is asking that the priesthood training largely moved out of the Seminary. The model might look like a combination of 'intellectual and spiritual training and practical experience. This should mean that celibacy should be optional, that priesthood be available to male, female and married persons. The priesthood should have a possibility of being a temporary or part time role. 4. God is asking that its prayer/ritual/reflection reflects the society in which it exists. If it did this it would nurture the souls of those participating. The Mass may need to change its existing form.

To pray for ourselves and for others to be closer to God. To spend time with our family by praying the Rosary together, and praying the Rosary every day, and to read the Bible everyday as a family

too. Talk about issues that are hard to talk about such as Confession—there are probably people who don't go to confession, because they are scared what the priest might say about their sins. This could be talked about during the homily at Mass.

To return the Church to being Catholic, open to and listening to all the faithful, as well as being a manifestation that we are all God's children, laity as well as those called to be anointed and to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. This latter group is, to be sure, a group apart but they must be discouraged from seeing themselves as therefore more special than the people at large: God doesn't see them as such according to my reading of early Christianity.

To develop a deeper connection with God by engaging each person in a deeper relationship with Him. Training people in MENTAL PRAYER, LECTIO DIVINA, EUCHARISTIC ADORATION, so as to develop a deeper sense of God and get more out of their participation in the liturgy. Give more space to the awareness, discernment and exercise of the charisms, under the authority of the local bishops. Also we should become more aware of the SPIRITUAL WARFARE, see Ephesians 6:10-18 and recent Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et Exsultate", 158-165. People should be trained to be aware and fight properly against the Power of Darkness and this topic should be more present in preaching, catechises, prayer meetings, pastoral strategies etc. Also more prayer groups and trained ministry teams engaging in deliverance prayer. More emphasis on this topic in theology classes and training for seminarians and any church ministers. Including a specific course for all seminarians on exorcism and deliverance prayer. The above topic can be a fruitful ground for ecumenism as well... Seriously exploring some of the new ministries that the Holy Spirit brought up, including Elijah House Ministry (founded by John and Paula Sandford), Transformation Prayer Ministry (founded by Dr Ed Smith), Unbound Ministry (Founded by Neal Lozano), John Paul II Healing Centre (Bob Schuchts) and an Australian ministry: Agape Encounter, founded by Helen Alcoc. I would recommend the above prayer ministries to facilitate a real encounter with God, deliverance from demonic influence and healing from the wounds one has received in the past, including sexual abuse: I have witnessed that happening first hand! This can be the key to bring resolution to so much hurt people have been experiencing in Australia!

A cleansing of the priesthood. All four gospels cite the Christ as stating that it was better for abusing priests to be drowned than to face judgement. I take this statement seriously.

The following represents input from a catholic group ([-], No. 4, [-]). 1. We believe the Church is currently far too clerical. Laity needs to be much more involved at all levels. This must include the equal participation of women. 2. The Church must cease from hiding behind canon law! Civil law must be primarily respected and followed and where necessary Canon Laws must be promptly changed/modified in order to ensure closer alignment with Civil laws. 3. Celibacy of priests must be made optional and priests must be permitted to marry! 4. Women must be treated with respect, indeed as being fully equal to males within the Church. Women should be eligible to hold any position within the Church (including that of Pope). 5. The third rite of reconciliation should be immediately introduced. 6. The Church needs to butt out of personal issues including birth control, homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia. Today's Catholics are better educated, familiar with modern law and well able to consider all issues deeply before employing their own freedom of conscience when dealing with such deeply personal and complex issues. Moreover, the ongoing revelations being exposed about the behaviour of offending priests and how the Church has

handled things, wreaks of hypocrisy! 7. Changes must be made in order to make the Church more relevant and attractive to our youth. 8. Serious effort is required to make Masses simpler, more joyful, more inclusive, more relevant and more interesting (across all age groups). 9. Regrettably our Church at present reflects enormous hypocrisy. Change is needed to address this especially considering the highly educated youth in today's world. 10. Priests should be spending much more time with their flocks and far less time on administration. With a growing shortage of priests, this is becoming vital. Laity could be more engaged in administrative matters thus freeing priests up to be more focused on Christ's work. Indeed priests should be closely following Christ's example. This would bring about greater exposure to the day-to-day life of parishioners which would assist priests in being better able to relate to "real world issues! 11. It is becoming harder and harder to keep our faith and remain committed to the Catholic Church. Urgent, radical and decisive changes are needed.



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. How are we going to save the Church as an institution?
2. When are the People of God going to be meaningfully empowered?
3. When are Parish Pastoral Councils going to have a say in the appointment of local priests?
4. How do we engage the younger generations? How can we have a succession plan when there's nobody to take over?
5. How can we help heal the marginalised?
6. How can we attract new people?
7. How can the Church address/show leadership in community issues e.g. Family breakdown, mental health (depression and suicide) domestic violence?
8. The Church needs to be a roadmap for life-mission, health and happiness. We have lost a couple of generations, how do we get them back?
9. How can we build community?
10. How can we use the gifts of all—for all ministries—including homilies?
11. What steps can be taken to change our liturgies so that they can be brought to life?
12. The Church can be a road map for life. How can we let that be known?
13. When will the Church recognise and allow women to hold positions of responsibility in the Church?
14. When will the Church allow married priests in the Australian Church?
15. When will the process of the selection of bishops be revised to include the laity?
16. How can the Mass be made more appealing?
17. How can the Church expect to remain relevant to educated young people in Australia when they consider it to be so out of touch on issues such as contraception and homosexuality?
18. What happened to the Third Rite of Reconciliation?
19. What is the future role of rite of reconciliation in the Church?
20. Are schools actually teaching Catholicism?
21. How is the Church going to address the issue of child abuse other than to deal with the legalities?
22. How can an organisation so broken restore faith in itself?
23. How can women be included in the decision making of the Church?
24. Why have you sought the input from people who don't know or believe in even the basics of our Catholic faith?
25. What is going to be done to convince people to believe in the creed?
26. Is the formality of the Mass irrelevant to meet modern needs?
27. When will women be rightly recognised as equals in the Church?
28. Why can't Australian priests marry?

29. Where is the compassion for those whose marriages have split?
30. How can the Church become more relevant for those living in rural, regional and remote Australia?
31. How are we going to make the Church in Australia more inclusive?
32. How can balanced decisions in the Church be made with autocratic structures, which enable bishops and parish priests to have total power over all in their diocese and parish?
33. Why can't we have a Church with equality in decision making among women and men, lay people and clergy?
34. Why was there no publicity in so many dioceses about the Plenary?
35. Why can't we have liturgy that is more meaningful in our lives? E.g. discussion about the Gospel after it is proclaimed.
36. Will there ever be female Priests?
37. How are we to encourage Catholics who have stopped coming to Mass to come back?
38. Do we need more permanent deacons, to help combat the shortage of priests?
39. How are we going to encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life?
40. How are we going to strengthen the Catholic element in schools and 'protect the brand'?
41. What can be done to ensure that seminarians are mentally well prepared and mature for a post Vatican II Church?
42. How can priests be better supported within their parishes and what induction or training is provided for priests from other countries?
43. How can the institutional outreach of the Church be more accessible to worshipping Catholics?
44. How can theology be made more accessible for young people in response to the modern need for rationality and science?
45. How do we remove the indifference to God that many people have?
46. Are there more opportunity for instruction in the 1st and 2nd rite of reconciliation, so that people appreciate beauty of the sacrament?
47. Can we consider the ability for divorced persons to remarry in the Catholic Church?
48. How do we increase our attendance at Mass?
49. How do we deal with the disillusionment of many older members due to the lack of youth participation?
50. How do we deal with the cynicism in light of the recent scandals in the Catholic Church?
51. How do we grow into the future given everything around the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse?
52. How do we help people to reconnect and make the Church the centre of our community?
53. How do we get back to the core teachings of Jesus and the Gospels, but still ensure that today's people understand?
54. How do we engage more fully with the communities in which our Churches and schools are based?
55. Do you think the Church could be more open to 'teaching about' and 'how to move' in the charismatic dimension of the Catholic Church in the wider Church and not just in charismatic circles?
56. What is the immediate action the hierarchy are going to take to salvage some of the Churches dignity and credibility?



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 32 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 image of God, has changed since I was growing up. He was depicted as quite aloof and scary when I was younger, but I now see God as a God of mercy and compassion, I need Him dearly in my life, so each day I embrace Him, in quiet prayer and thankfulness. I would not be where I am now, without his constant loving embrace. He holds me in the palm of his hand, and cares and loves me deeply. He stirs my conscience at times and this awareness is vital to help me make good decisions in my life. I love the Holy Spirit especially as He guides me and gives me the strength I need to live my faith. By that I don't mean by words, but by actions, smiling and reaching out to others. Family is so important to me, as this is where our grounding in the faith starts. My world evolves around my family and I am so blessed to have them, having lost one of our children, they have helped me cope, but I would be so lost and void of life, if I didn't have my faith. I am fortunate to have grown up in a Catholic family, but in saying that, Christ is in everyone, not just Catholics, so we need to open our eyes to see Christ in others and seek the gifts they have. If they live good lives, they will get to Heaven, as our Father wants all of us with Him.

My faith has sustained me despite what the Church members have done. I remain resilient even now, though I deplore what I read in the media.

I live in a small rural area that has a strong faith community—and a strong town community too. We also have an ecumenical community—and all three give me great strength and support. I've been an active Church-goer since primary school days—I loved the nuns and the Catholic friends I made there. Have never 'left' the Church, have always loved attending Mass and feeling part of that faith community. In my 40s, I came to be more active in the Church through 'Renew' and 'Renewal of Faith' and adult faith education courses . . . and have loved feeling I was really part of the whole structure. We were blessed to have a late vocation parish priest for 20 years who really let us be involved as Pastoral Council etc. With a succession of overseas priests serving us now, I struggle to feel included, although I'm still active in parish affairs. I long for the day we might get shepherds who don't mind getting the smell of the sheep on themselves . . . we still need leaders.

I work in pastoral care in a parish but also in aged care, two very different roles in one sense but roles that give me great scope to see God working through me, to help the other. I was asked to organize a memorial service for a major event where three people were killed. I spent a lot of time assessing the need for the service and along with my colleague came up with a service that helped families staff and residents share their grief and loss through the sharing and walking with each other. We were asked if a Mass was appropriate we felt 95% of people would not understand or connect with the Mass, what we offered honoured the human spirit, honoured our creator God through the sharing of stories of love and care we felt God was present in each of us. We had two priests present who valued what two lay people offered to all those present and affirmed our thoughts about Gods presence. I prayed often around this event and truly felt our gifts to connect with those present honoured God in a different way but was very important for all.

I recently for the past 5 years been a parishioner at the [-] parish in [-]. The previous parish priest I am informed displayed a complete aversion to and refused to contemplate a Parish Council let alone one that was democratically elected. Instead a secretive organisation euphemistically called a Faith and Life Committee which if it was not faithless was certainly lifeless and never in his time reported to the laity. Before the appointment of the latest PP there was a meeting convened to attempt to elicit the views of the faithful as to what type of PP would be desirable. My comment is that we need a Democrat and not an Autocrat. Sadly this sentiment was not fulfilled as the new PP when I addressed the need for a properly representative and elected Council said that the edict from the diocese (to wit Archbishop [-] no less) had decreed that this process was not allowed and the PP made certain enquires as to “suitable members” and appointed them. This of course ensured that the previous collection of sycophants and quislings continued to be involved. In conversation with other lay people this misgivings were also held. Anything requiring the PP to think outside the square were either rejected or ignored such as suggestions to involve the pupils at the local schools or including the readings and the sermon to be set out in the newsletter or displayed on the screen at Mass. As a member of the choir we were relegated to the back of the Church and not at the front of the Congregation which is arguably more appropriate and inspiring. Again a lack of a sense of inclusion of the laity not a continuation of the “them and us” syndrome.

My wife and I belong to a movement for married couples called “Teams”. This has shaped my faith significantly.

The loss of a sibling who was 5 days old really shattered my view on religion. This was further reinforced when I watched by father experience 4 years of pain before he died of prostate cancer. He was very actively involved in the local parish and he actually told a priest that religion was a lie before he died. Furthermore, I am an ecologist and do not see much of a hand in the way a God might manage all of life—not just Homo sapiens [species].

I have many stories to share. One which dampens the faith of communities is this. After many hours of preparation for the receiving of the sacrament of confirmation the bishop who was conferring the sacrament did not address the candidates (children) at all but ignored them although they were the reason AND FOCUS of the visit to the parish. WHERE IS THE LOVE THERE? JESUS IS THE REASON WE BELONG TO THE CHURCH YET SOME BISHOPS DO NOT HAVE JESUS AS THEIR MODEL. Many of our children make a mistake (marry and divorce) and the Church does not forgive them or show mercy. I believe God is the only one who can judge another human being. It is what is in the heart that matters! No church has the right to denigrate another, or ostracize them.

My faith is very simple—I love God, and I love attending church. However, its relevance in the lives of so many is simply not there. My children do not attend church anymore as they say there is no relevance and to a degree I agree with them. The main reason I attend church is to feel close to my deceased mother. The rest seems irrelevant and I understand my children's views. After a break from going to church recently due to my personal struggle with the Church's complicity in the abuse cover-up, I felt at home when I returned this past weekend. However, I still feel a separation from the actual celebration of the Mass.

Our Church needs to respond to the signs of the times with increasing secularism and plurality challenging the very notions of what it means to be a human made in the image and likeness of God. Mindful of the warning issued by Pope Francis on the dangers of over-clericalism, we need a Church leadership which truly sees non-professed laity as equal partners with the clerics in processes and decision-making to help our Church be more open, inclusive, innovative, transparent and pastoral. To value the shared-wisdom of our experienced and faith-filled lay people. We need to be a Church which supports its ordained clergy either from overseas or in local seminaries to be fully coherent of the cultural context in which the Australian Church has grown and operated and which welcomes diversity. We need to be a Church that will inspire young people, recognise their aspirations, and engage in dialogue to encourage their active

<p>participation in the life and future of our Church. We need to be a Church that puts service back at the centre of its Mission. Outreach through servant leadership at all levels and a preferential option for the poor (in whatever way 'poor' manifests itself) in our world today.</p>
<p>When I look back on my childhood and going to a Catholic school, I feel that we were all brainwashed with regards to religion. Instead of wanting to go to church, we were scared not to. I value my beliefs but I no longer hold the Church and some of its teachings in high esteem.</p>
<p>Being asked what would Jesus do and my answer is tell the truth so I ask you tell the truth</p>
<p>A terrible experience involving our local parish council affected me greatly. Differences of option, conflict etc. affected people not involved in the issue, on the council, causing much emotional pain and uncertainty. A process was engaged to deal with events but only fellow parishioners/council members, gave understanding and support to keep me from turning from the Church, sadly not the parish priest. It has made me believe, that we are the Church, the people more so than the "parish priest", who through no fault of their own, aren't equipped to deal with the many and varied issues that present.</p> <p>I hope to each week take away a message from the homily that speaks to me, my life. To give me guidance, hope, encouragement. It doesn't currently happen, but we hang in there in hope. I recently attended our primary school graduation Mass, an opportunity to the parish priest to speak to the directly to the graduating class. I am aware it may also be the last Mass some of these kids ever attend. The homily was so far off the mark as being relevant to the kids, it was disheartening. The kids just go through the motions, but nothing is gained, nothing taken away for their faith journey.</p>
<p>I come from a wonderful Catholic background with Uncles and aunties who were/are Jesuits and Mercy Nuns. I teach in a Catholic school and I attend Mass and am the music liturgist most Sundays. Apart from the elderly, the few others who attend Mass in my parish are mostly from ultra-conservative home-schooled families. My own children went to Mass until they left home to attend university. While I do not think they have lost their faith in God, my two professional daughters have lost faith in the Church. The sexual abuse scandal, the anti-gay marriage rhetoric, the patriarchal nature of governance, and the attitude towards contraception have made it impossible for them to remain active participants. All of my children are strong advocates for social justice and they applaud the Australian bishops for their stance on off-shore detention and other issues such as climate change. However the Church in Australia must engage with the other issues mentioned if it is to have a hope of retaining educated women within the ranks of its faithful. As a teacher in a Catholic school I find the only way to re-contextualise my faith so that it has relevance to my students is through Social Justice. I continually to promote Caritas and all its wonderful work but I despair at times for the future of my parish and the Church in Australia as a whole.</p>
<p>Each had personal stories to share about family members who were "non-practising" for various reasons. The issue of Catholics with broken marriages was raised and the question of the Church's failure to fully accept divorced people.</p> <p>Each in the group talked about the hope/possibility of having adult children be active members of the Church. We felt that parishioners need to make newcomers welcome and have some structure for making this happen. The never-ending need to see Christ in everyone must be lived out, right across the breadth of the parish. The manpower issue persists and the variety of solutions: top of the list is married clergy (incl. deacons). Women's role in the Church is to be developed further. Our parish already has a female chair of the Parish Pastoral Council—so that's a start. We see parish schools with hundreds of children; How are families of Prep children given a chance to be involved in the parish? The same applies to secondary schools where we see an even wider gap in the level to which students are engaged. Just watch them at a monthly student Mass and one will see no responses, no joining in even the Lord's Prayer, certainly no singing. Huge</p>

change needed in approach. It's hardly surprising that there these would not be part of parish activities. The school that operates under the banner of Christianity seems to need a change in direction in order to be delivering the goods.
I have been disappointed by the Church's efforts in accommodating teachings of other faiths rather than the teachings of the Church at my Catholic schools. I am grateful that the Lord through his Grace led me to attend adoration at [-] Cathedral [-] in my adult years where I finally met devout priests and Religious who finally taught the truth without fear.
I have had one of the worst experiences of discrimination by a very prominent Catholic woman when I suggested we might assist people with a disability to attend Mass. The response was "YOU DON'T EXPECT US TO PUT THOSE PEOPLE IN OUR CAR. DON'T THOSE KIND OF PEOPLE HAVE TURNS? WELL, WE ARE NOT INSURED". I understand the fear of seizures and people not knowing what to do but Inclusive groups can provide solutions to those with special needs. My son comes home every 2nd weekend and is frustrated that he misses Mass every second weekend. I find it unacceptable to MAKE staff take them to church when the staff member may be of another faith.
I have experienced an inclusive parish where all were welcomed and included. The church was packed for every Mass. Families including young attended. A rare but wonderful experience. A lot depends on the attitude of the bishop and the priests.
My experience is that of a Catholic teacher, teaching in the Catholic system for the past 30 years. Over this time, I have worked alongside many, many wonderful people who have had the genuine interest of students and families and held them dear to their hearts. Schools have made an incredible contribution to the work of the Church especially in the last 10 years as so many families have become disengaged with mainstream Church. Unfortunately, most of these wonderful people no longer engage with the formal Church, however are interested in their own spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of the students they teach and the families they engage with. The established Church has become irrelevant in their lives, but the spiritual life that a Catholic school offers them is very important to them. Having prepared hundreds of students for the sacraments and engaging with families at this time has been a real privilege. I often wonder why they choose to receive the sacraments but obviously, they still have meaning in their lives, but the day to day manifestation of Church does not.
Cynical because of the lack of belief on the part of priests and Religious.
Being a Catholic in Australia in my lifetime is like being at the Crucifixion and watching Jesus die. One program after another destroying what little faith people had left.
When I was in the primary school, I found the Catholic church to be boring and dry. Everyone who did the readings were like robots performing their duty. The priest always seemed too busy and unapproachable to ask real questions about life and how the scriptures could be of use to me in today's world. I don't think the priest even knew I existed. The popular "IN" families were noticed and got all the attention, having meals together all the time and hanging out.
I'm the eldest of 6 children. My father was a Catholic and my mother converted to Catholicism prior to marrying my father. I am their only child who did not attend a Catholic school, however, I am the only one who still practises their faith. Why? One of my theories is that my siblings had religion rammed down their throat by my mother when they became adults. During my mother's conversion to Catholicism, was she brainwashed? My own faith has been rocked in recent years. I am a teacher but no longer teach in a Catholic school. I was not given a plausible reason as to why my contract was renewed. I was one of the very few practising Catholics teaching at this particular Catholic school. It would seem to me that this was a distinct disadvantage. Just when I thought my faith was beginning to get strong again, I heard a priest name a parishioner, during the homily, for causing him (the priest) stress. Disgraceful! Where is the empathy and compassion? I am worried that if I dared speak to the priest about this that my name would be blasted from the pulpit. The priest also went on to say that the bishop supported him. A few years ago, the bishop said Mass in my parish and it was at the time of the inquiring into the paedophilia that had occurred in [-]. The bishop asked us to pray for the priest involved. Nothing said about praying for the victims. I

was quite upset as I had, at one time, lived in [-], and I knew the families of the victims. All of these things have caused my faith to be very rocky and at the moment I am debating whether to continue going to Mass in my current parish. Please pray for me.
From [-], My faith was passed on to me by my parents, they gave a strong example not just in words but also actions. [-] said his faith has helped him overcome many obstacles and still to this day, he hears the words do not be afraid.
No. The recent revelations that the Pope is aware of the atrocities some Nuns experienced at the hands of priests and bishops has both shocked and alarmed me. This on top of the recent Royal Commission report and the Church's apparent lack of resolve to not permit women in anything other than support roles is leaving me struggling. Knowing a number of Clergy who are genuine men of God helps. I am hoping and praying for leadership from Pope Francis to make real, practical and effective change in the Church.
I find Spiritual nourishment from gathering in small groups of Faith-filled people to reflect on Scripture, pray together and support each other to be better Christians. There have been many Lenten Groups in various parishes and dioceses I have lived in which have connected me with others who have challenged and led me to be a better person. There have been various programs I have taken part in over the last 4 decades from which I have made life-long friends as a result of our shared values. These include [-] (as a lead couple with my husband), Catholic Society for Marriage Education (as a Marriage Educator for 20 years), my Catholic schooling in the late 1960s and early 1970s, parish-based small groups (e.g. Renew and Lenten programs from various dioceses), some outstanding priests in parishes where I've lived or with whom I have worked, especially in National Marriage Education, my present involvement as a member of a Team (Equipes Notre Dame) and in a Sector Team. The National Pastoral Institute, at which my husband studied for a year early in our marriage, was pivotal in expanding my view of Church and our place in it.
I am a female with more than one Post Graduate Theology qualification from Catholic educational facilities, however my voice is not respected as much as a male with half the educational background. I do not even get asked. When I first met our bishop, he asked the names of the men either side of me, where they worked and their opinions. I was not asked anything. If an educated woman is being ignored by my own bishop, how many women without the benefit of education are being ignored?
We spoke about the great things that we have seen of the Catholic Church being inclusive—advocating for disadvantaged groups of people, supporting communities with faith development, highlighting environmental needs or our world and the great education being provided by the Catholic schools of Australia. We also spoke about the experiences we have with the Catholic Church not being inclusive—excluding people from taking communion—single parent families being excluded from baptism or full participation, abuse victims being hidden, ignored and not properly cared for or compensated, and other religions not being included in dialogue. We also spoke about the experiences about the variation between parishes and schools - depending on parish priest, parishioners, Catholic Education Systems, dioceses and Bishops.
I am a Catholic home-schooled teenager, and I love our Catholic faith. The more I learn of it, the more I am amazed by its beauty, and the meaning it gives to our lives. But all I have learned has come from our own books, home schooling materials, and my own spiritual reading and research. I remember feeling somewhat disappointed with the Sacramental Program at our parish. In the preparation for the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation, there were no stories of the Saints, which I was very disappointed about, because I had been looking forward to hearing more about Bl. Imelda Lambertini after watching an EWTN Truth in the Heart episode which said that I would probably learn more about her when preparing for Holy Communion. In preparing to receive the Eucharist, most of the emphasis was placed on it being 'a meal we share together' instead of a reverent focus on Christ's Real Presence. And when I made my First Confession, I did not even realize that I was supposed to confess all my sins up to that point; I thought I needed to

pick just one to confess every time... But thankfully the Lord has blessed me with a good Catholic education at home. I feel very sorry for those other Catholics who have not received a good catechesis, and have not been privileged to be brought up in the same situation I am blessed with. We are failing them by not passing on the full richness and beauty of the Catholic faith, but by handing them a watered-down teaching with no real substance or meaning. Deep down there is a desire for holiness in each of us, born of the desire to be at rest and united with the God who made us. This desire needs to be awakened by a challenging call. Holiness is not easy; it is hard to detach ourselves from our sinful attachments. But the Church is here to make Saints, by giving us the strength to conquer sin and carry our Cross. It is not happiness in this life we are after, but in the next, and it should be our goal to instil this truth in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

I have grown up a Catholic both in religious affiliation and culture. Living in a Catholic family and attending Catholic schools I did not encounter a non-Catholic environment until I was in my twenties. My experience of the Church and particularly my parish community at Chelsea in Victoria has been extremely positive. I have a strong connection to God through the Church and feel extremely blessed. While I recognise that all communities are made up of humans and therefore have strengths and weaknesses I have been deeply disappointed in the sexual abuse of children and the lack of action by good people. I am also disappointed that the Church still does not recognise the possibility of women being involved in priestly ministry.

My faith has been my stronghold from when I was little and although there have been times when I couldn't attend Church because of hurt I have never felt bereft of God's love. My faith has sustained me, in the growing up in a large family, in the family's struggle with issues of low income, in my young adult years as a member of YCCW, in my marriage and the loss of a child, in navigating family of origin conflict, in the deepening of my spirituality.

The laying on of hands changed my whole interior life for the better. I was so broken all I wanted to do was to die. But by having people care enough about you [me] to spend time and pray with and for you. Has changed my whole life. Mother Church has been there with the sacraments but as far as education and deepening my walk I would say she has not really met my need. It has only been through charismatic renewal that I heard the most amazing teachers and sharing. I have learnt to worship in spirit and in truth at a level that is not available in the average Sunday Mass. To say it is not everyone's cup of tea is just the excuse that is used not to grow people further than where they are today. I'm aware that people do and can run off on tangents and privacy and holiness is top priority when ministering to God's people. But the time is past. We need renewal and we need it now. Or the future is very bleak in deed. "Life in the spirit" seminars are very well run and beautifully laid out. Alpha [Catholic version] I believe is even gentler. The amount of testimonies I heard of how wonderful experience and life changing it was is very encouraging. Thank you for taking the time to listen to Australia and opening the doors. I pray that the Holy Spirit shall move over the deep.

Priests that are actually faithful to Catholic doctrine and not trying to water it down give me hope that modernism will not wither the routes of the Church just yet.

Stories shared were hurtful and full of guilt from the treatment of clergy e.g.: No compassion or understanding of their situation and told to get on with life and do their duty. The tellers of the stories even though they were still hurting have remained faithful to God and the Church.

As a practicing member of the Church for 71 years, I am sad to admit my faith in the leadership has been destroyed due to their failure to address clerical sexual assaults until they were exposed by the media and Royal Commission. The response has been too little too late for me and my family who have a member amongst those assaulted. This is a grave obstacle to my continued faith in God. It's due to the support only of others in our faith community that I hang in there by a single thread! I pray that the hierarchy can be humble, trust God, release their power and control to allow the Holy Spirit and God to do his work in the Church.

Over the past 20 years our family has had the great opportunity of associating with beautiful faith-filled families through the National Association of Catholic Families, who love and are open to life,

are joy-filled and truly strive to live the call to holiness as expounded in the Holy Father's exhortation through His Encyclicals as also St John Paul II's exhortation, "Familiaris Consortio". These gathering of families have helped us raise our children and given our children examples of faith and love. Prayer, teaching of the faith and the giving of moral, social and spiritual support is at the core of these gatherings. We have been truly blessed.
I came to faith from a non-practising Catholic family through the influence of the school (primary and secondary) nuns and priests I met along the way. YCW, good Catholic neighbours etc. Mass and Church has always meant a lot to me . . . have never doubted my faith, but HAVE doubted the Church ... especially of late when my own family has been touched by abuses . . . but it is my sense of belonging to my local church community, my admiration of my friends of great faith—including priests and nuns, that makes me believe I'm still on the right path. The hierarchical structure has led the Church to a grave point of depravity. It's hard to keep faith with 'The Church' . . . I sometimes feel like jumping ship and following a true shepherd (we have a fantastic UC minister in our town who speaks MY language . . . and Jesus' language!)
Living in a faith-based community is very important for me. Regular worship and participation in the sacramental life of the Church used to be an important way on me experiencing this. The liturgical changes leave me dispirited and bewildered. These changes and all that underpins them have impacted very negatively on the way I used to live my life as a Catholic person. I have needed to explore other ways to experience a sense of community, which is so important to me.
Sent from [-]'s iPad. Being born to a Protestant Mother and an Anglican father, I was christened a Methodist. My Mother shared with my brother and I the deep faith that she held, and sent us weekly to Sunday school. Sadly, when I was eight my Mother died in childbirth. God became very real to me, and my comfort in times of loneliness, life held many challenges for me. Sometime after marrying my non-practicing Catholic husband, I converted, but as the Mass was still in Latin, I felt much at sea. I was pleased when after Vatican II when the Mass was in English I was able to respond. My life revolved much around raising my family, taking them to Mass etc., 1978 the Lord had a surprise for me when I attended a charismatic prayer meeting and I found the joy of the Spirit. I felt the power of God's love. And my life has never been the same. I think we need the third rite for reconciliation or something similar. Some people as they become adults live with the fear and the blame they feel, especially if they haven't attended Mass or the sacraments regularly they feel they haven't lived up to what is expected of them. They feel unworthy. They are loaded up with all the burdens we placed on them as children and think they have burnt their bridges. None of us are worthy, but we have a loving God, a forgiving God who is waiting to receive everyone. A God who says (Come as you are). RCIA is a very important area in the Church and even though it's a big commitment for both the candidate and the sponsor anyone who has become involved has remarked how they have enjoyed the experience.
I was raised a Catholic. I left the Church. I took the wrong path. In Scripture Christ revealed Himself to me. He led me back to the Church, and through community I was introduced to the person of the Holy Spirit and my life was changed for the better, forever. I walk now as a Christian Catholic, not as a Catholic Christian.
People still have faith/spirituality but don't feel attending Mass is necessary. People go to Church while living at home but once going to uni/moving out they focus more on career/social life. Seminarians tend to be more conservative. Very liturgy/Mass focused and into tradition. Catholic school and public school experiences can provide different views on things e.g. behaviour, morals, etc. Priests afraid to speak on issues e.g. divorce, in case they offend lack of belonging—people not feeling included if they are separated/divorced, etc.
We note that poor leadership from the Church hierarchy down to the local parish priest is the reason people are being driven away from Mass attendance and Church life. In particular we note the fact that many young people including our own children feel completely disconnected from the Church due to some of these poor practices. Unless people see the Church as an organisation which relates to their needs, which includes them in its decision making, which answers truthfully

to and addresses its faults and which pursues the mission of Jesus, there will be an inevitable downfall and end to its standing in the Australian society. A final question: What are the bishops of Australia going to do to restore the trust and respect of the laity in the Governance of the Church?

As a teacher, I have seen really good things happen when people, young and older, have the opportunity to explore their own "Spirit" and learn to trust it. Young people prefer to roll up their sleeves and 'do' their faith, especially with people on the margins. We are all spiritual before we are religious.

I was raised in a Catholic family and taught by Brigidine Sisters, and my Catholic Faith was well formed. I grew up loving the Church, and being an active participant at daily Masses, even as a teenager. Although there was a lapse in the practice of my Faith in my early twenties, when I returned to a small parish, my Faith was again an important part of my daily life. My best experiences have been small Pilgrimages to Divine Mercy Shrine, Tarcutta, Our Lady of Mercy at Berrima, Schoenstatt Monastery at Mulgoa. I also found that getting together in a small group with friends to look at the writings of the Fathers of the Church, Vatican II Documents and other good Catholic resources, has nurtured and strengthened my Faith. Along with Prolife activities and praying the Rosary and Divine Mercy together. I have also fostered friendships with Catholics worldwide, through Facebook, and run and maintain prolife and prayer groups on FB. As a result of these friendships, a group of us, from several countries, have and still pray the Rosary, via Skype, every day. We have done this for almost 2yrs now. Some members have come and gone, according to other commitments, but the core group remains. This has been a wonderful spiritual support for all of us as we face life's challenges.

I was brought up in a strong Catholic family. All my schooling was completed at Catholic schools and I have worked at a Catholic school for the past 15 years. My Confirmation was said in Latin, I did not understand one single word of it! My husband is not a Catholic, but I was married in the Catholic Church. We were young when we got married and the priest was truly horrible and rude to us. His words were "So you have to get married".....I was naive, so the questioning lead to "SO YOU ARE PREGNANT". I was so shocked, hurt and embarrassed that he had made such a startling, unfair assumption of us, due to our age. Luckily he had to leave the parish before we were married, and another priest came and restored my faith in religious kindness and fairness because he was lovely. When I was a child at school we were taught to fear God and live in guilt. I was terrified of God. I did not feel that he was a loving God, I felt that he was going to harm me or my family if I didn't follow the Catholic faith... Over time and as I matured, and I was able to escape that fear, I rebelled against the Catholic religion, but not against God, because I recognised that it was the religion instilling the fear it was not God. I had been bullied and scared into following a religion. I did try to disbelieve or find reasoning as to why God did not exist. But I had two very unbelievable choices. One gave me hope and the other just gave me existence. The first one was God; an unbelievable entity that created all, but also provided a heaven for the soul before and after life. That gave a soul, feelings, emotions, conscience etc... A God that I could thank and pray to in times of need, who I could turn to if I felt lost, alone or helpless. A God who might be listening. My second choice (Just the big bang theory), gave me nothing but existence. I felt that my loved ones and even pets that had passed, were still with me; I needed to feel that. I needed to know that they were in heaven. I needed/need to know that my baby was/is in the arms of God, that my Dad was/is still around and that my pets are. So I faithfully believe in God. However, to be honest, my religion is "Be the best person that you can be to yourself and to others." This is what I taught my own children who are both baptised Catholics, but who I did not raise as practising Catholics. I raised them to be Christian people who truly care for God's world. I believe in God, but I don't necessarily believe in aspects of religion. Because I want to see change. I want it to be relatable, to be inclusive, to be understandable and less intimidating. The Catholic Church needs change. I am a true Catholic at work, and I am so proud to work at [-] because it is

extraordinary, and the Catholic Church would be so proud of the people and students that attend the school and how the staff genuinely exude the Catholic ethos every single day.
High attendance at Catholic schools indicates that Catholic values are important to younger parents. Yet this is not being translated into membership of the broader Church... School is their church.
My faith was shaped as a student at a Catholic Girls school from prep to Yr 12 supported by my family. It is steadfast and ingrained in me and has been a wonderful support through the years of life's ups and downs.
In brief... Great memories of schooling in Catholic schools and great memories of caring and supportive clergy = as an adult continuing own faith and baptising of 4 children all attending Catholic schools. Still have very caring and supportive clergy in current parish.
I suppose the experience that has shaped my faith the most was the death of my husband. It was a time when the theology of suffering as being redemptive or educational was blown to smithereens. Suffering just is. God is not the cause and for some not the solution. For me, [-]'s suffering was awful and cruel, but even in the most hideous part of the journey, there were little resurrections and miracles. I believe that God walked with us all during this time. The idea of 'offering it up for the holy souls' only spoke of the stupidity of the Church for even letting such an ethos out of the cage. [-] certainly didn't and nor did I.
For serious medical reasons, I had to limit the number of children my husband and I had. I sought council and made the decision to have a tubal ligation. This was a very pro-life decision as it honoured the lives of the children I did have, along with the life of my husband. THE CHURCH NEEDS TO GET OUT OF THE BEDROOM AND INTO THE BOARDROOM. I am quite aware that many people I know have made the same decision for very different reasons. One of my many doctors once asked me whether I could be pregnant. I answered in the negative. His reply which I remember 34 years on, was "Thank God for that. You Catholics are a pack of pelvic theologians." Indeed.
I was born into, and grew up in "the Faith". Definitely, the strongest influences for me, in respect of faith, were my mother and grandmother and great grandmother, and the sisters who travelled every weekday to educate us, all of them intrepid women who knew that the maintenance of the faith was everything.
I have many wonderful memories of my Catholic upbringing and the religious teachers. They were extremely strict but fortunately we were blessed with kind and dedicated teachers. However, I still believe they should have been given the choice of sharing their lives with a partner. I continue to emphasize that the choice should be there as many may still choose the religious life as a single person.
Back in the 70 when I began teaching studies, the Catholic Church was a huge supporter of my career. I was given a studentship through the diocese, I went to a Catholic college and as a teacher had access to a lot of personal and professional development opportunities. This has been a wonderful framework for my life and career. I am very grateful for that. I have a male friend who is gay and has a strong connection with his faith and Jesus. He feels excluded and hurt, disillusioned. Why would we turn anyone away who wants to be included?? This is outrageous. I am divorced. This was not my choice. I tried so very hard to keep my marriage together but it was not to be. I have always had a strong, steady faith and spiritual connection with God/Jesus/Spirit. I am a lector and special minister and participate in the Mass. Why would you exclude me from receiving communion? We have had a strong Catholic upbringing—Mass every Sunday with our families, sacraments etc. We are hurting and upset about the findings of the Royal Commission. Who can we trust? We know there are good priests out there... but ... really? Whilst just a few have been abusers, many priests have known and kept quiet about these hideous events. We feel betrayed.
Having a lapsed Catholic for many years, I returned to my faith serendipitously after attending a healing Mass for my children. I am now involved in two leadership positions involving children in

our parish and feel extremely disillusioned as to why I keep going in an institution as rotten as this is. I have thought about throwing in the towel on many occasions, but especially in view of the child abuse scandals. I am embarrassed to call myself a Catholic.

I was born into the Catholic faith, I experienced a great amount of abuse at home, school and then by many other people in my life. My parents came from Slovenia, my mother was the second youngest of 9 children, during the war my mother's 2 brothers and sister was executed and another brother was never found. My mother was sentenced to 20yrs imprisonment fighting against Communism. After 9 yrs she escaped and was shipped to Australia. My father was taken at an early age and forced to go into the German army. He survived a most harrowing time by eating people and stealing what he could to stay alive. He was one of the handful of soldiers who walked from Stalingrad, Montecasino and to the Russian front. My father also ran from Slovenia and came to Australia. I didn't understand my parents and all they went through these two people had an extremely impossible road yet my mother remained faithful to God and her Church at all cost. I grew up in their war my childhood days were spent trying to survive all the trauma, anger, hatred and bitterness they carry in their hearts. So many times I was close to death by their hands, Christmas, Easter, weekends and school holidays were like nightmares as I longed to get away from the hell I experienced at home. By the age of 6, I was already physically, emotionally and sexually abused. I also had a learning disability and my experience at school was one of harsh discipline and the black strap. So I grew up a very angry and bitter person. I lived many years in hate hoping that my life could end sooner than later. I got married and all that emotional hate and anger followed me. It was 7 yrs into my marriage I began to fall apart and I ask God to end my life as it was unbearable. Well God did show up and walked me into Catholic Charismatic renewal, finally a place I could find help in the deepest parts of my heart. Through Renewal, I found the real presence of Jesus who healed my broken heart and put me back together again. Miracle after miracle I know how good God is. I have been in Renewal for 29yrs. I spent the first 11yrs healing through the ministry they provided. After that I began to attend many Bible teachings, School of Evangelisation and other scripture days with Bishop [-] provided. I serve in the Renewal helping others find the path to Jesus and his amazing grace. I do remember when I was young that we had two salvation army people who used to come to our house and would show us how to read the Bible but we were too ignorant as my mother would say we were ok because we are Catholic. Today I read the Bible everyday asking God to help me to live His word. How important it is to have an open dialogue with God, if only we could respond humbly and ...

If I wasn't baptized in the Holy Spirit I wouldn't stay in the Catholic Church. Having a personal relationship with Jesus has saved me from destroying myself. Surrender our lives to Him we could pass onto the next generations a future full of hope and grace. History does not have to repeat itself but with God we are transformed into His children bringing blessings for all to share, it is up to us , the choice is ours.

My experience of being a young practicing Catholic from middle class, mainstream Australia is of having to make enormous sacrifices to be formed and to persevere in the faith. My Catholicity is in spite of 95% of my expensive schooling and decades of participation in parish life. I am grateful to God that He brought me into contact with individuals, books, online resources (often American) and the rare faithful Catholic communities in Australia and abroad.

I have been raised a Catholic. My parents were devout in their faith and provided excellent role models. I have been a regular Mass attendee all my life and have had a strong faith and commitment to my Catholic ideology. I have been involved in many parish activities and also in Marriage Encounter and Teams of Our Lady. Both movements have provided great support to our sacramental marriage and faith development. However my faith is now waning. The scandals, inequities, clericalism have slowly been eroding my faith and trust in the Church. The evidence presented at the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse has been devastating and now the conviction of George Pell has been the last straw. I am extremely angry, disillusioned and feel

embarrassed to be a Catholic. Where to from here, Who knows. The Church hierarchy needs to step us needs to step up and provide support to so many more like me. Unfortunately trust is hard to regain. Change needs to occur.
I grew up in the 70s and 80s, narrowly avoiding being sexually abused by a choirmaster at [-] church in [-]. A number of friends were not so lucky. One suicide and many lives ruined, I have witnessed chaos at the hands of those in charge since my teens. My experience of the Church has been one of denial, bewilderment, hope, disillusionment, anger and despair. This has shaped me as a Catholic in Australia today. My generation, the lucky ones who escaped abuse, are a traumatised generation who have lost faith in the Church.
My faith comes from my family. My family was part of a smaller but very engaged and progressive parish. The parish is a welcoming, active and life-giving community that extends beyond Sunday Mass. Going to Mass with fellow parishioners is not enough. We need to be eating together, playing together, celebrating together and working in the community together. We need to take our faith beyond the church walls. People need to see us and want to join us because of the faith we demonstrate, the fun we have and the good we do.
Our College offers a staff/parent/parishioner pilgrimage to Assisi to follow in the footsteps of Saint Francis and Saint Clare. This has been an incredible experience for those involved and continues to attract large numbers of people wanting to take the journey. This immersion has developed a renewed sense of connection to our charism and our faith within the College community.
In the 1970's I participated in a Renewal of Faith program, which led me then into the emerging wave of the Holy Spirit across many denominations. This grace of accepting the real power of my baptism has changed my life. I was brought up with fear and guilt with my Catholic teaching and by grace was gradually healed. It also was a time of growth in the Catholic Church post Vatican II. I also discovered much in common with people of other faiths. I know that I couldn't have come through the trials in my life without the Spirit as guide as well as the various groups of like-minded people who really mentored and strengthened my faith. I studied basic theology and have always had a hunger for more! Small groups enable people to be heard and learn to trust as well as be challenged and grow. I read and follow sound Catholic theologians and have discovered Christian meditation. We are The Church!
In my own experience, and in the experiences of other Catholics I have spoken to, in the 1980s and 1990s sacramental preparation felt more like sessions sharing the opinions and experiences of the other children rather than learning the Gospel, the truths of the Church and the meaning of the sacraments. The same can be said for my experience of religious education in a Catholic secondary school in the late 1990s and early 2000s. There was a lot of focus on social justice but little explanation for why Catholics believe what they believe and how that gives life meaning. There was very little said about Jesus present in the Eucharist and the beauty of the Mass and very little said about the lives of the Saints. In the later years of secondary school there was a lot of comparing and contrasting the opinions of all world religions on moral issues, and discussion about our own opinions, with very little effort put into explaining Catholic truths. I would be greatly surprised if any of my fellow students of that time continue to attend Mass to this day. (I have incorporated more of my experiences into the additional file submitted).
I thank God for the programs I have had an opportunity to be part of through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and Catholic School of Evangelisation. My faith in God has deepened, there have been many opportunities to expect and see spiritual and physical healings.
I am a convert to Catholicism. I first attended a Latin Mass and I have never looked back.
At 55 yrs. of age I realised I did not KNOW God (Jesus) in a close, real way as I saw others in a Charismatic prayer group seemed to know him. I submitted myself as completely to him as I could and the next day he had changed me. I was full of love and joy (I did not know what joy was before that, I thought it was just happiness, but it is altogether different.) I told all my contacts that I loved them, that God loved them, I was full of love. Then I had a longing to absorb the Bible

(it was a closed book to me before that surrender). I attended a Bible group—none in the Catholic Church where I lived, so I went to a combined protestant group, and grew and grew and grew and absolutely loved what I was learning. The Holy Spirit took me from one wonder to the next over a period of years, with much healing along the way, and now at 81, my love of the Bible has not diminished one bit, nor has the love of God and everyone and everything. I am still learning because his treasures are endless. He has developed gifts of music, organisation, teaching, prophetic words in prayer, and I've been told that leading is part of what he has done in me. How absolutely incredible, and all glory to him. I love everything about him. Oh, I PRAY and hope that people can be told about this wonderful new life through the Church—they do not know about it.

My experience of growing up in Catholic schools was of receiving no strong formation in morals or theology throughout high school. We knew vaguely what was right or wrong but not why. Our religion teachers were often not Catholic themselves. When we left and went to university, we all got non-Catholic boyfriends who expected us to fall into bed with them and almost without exception, that's what happened—we had no strong arguments to offer against their persuasion and no clear idea of just what was right or wrong in this sphere. Older people often seem to think those in their forties and fifties now left because the Church wasn't 'relevant' enough or green enough—it's not true. They left because the choices they had made were morally wrong, and this created a need either to say 'I am wrong and I must stop what I'm doing'—which might have meant losing their boyfriend—or 'the Church is wrong on this point'. Most of them took the latter point of view, thus retaining their boyfriends/partners. Once this choice is made, it becomes pervasive—if the Church is 'wrong' on this point, we can start making decisions that it's wrong on other points. There begins the spirit of dissent so characteristic of the Church today. Give young people the fullness of the faith. Teach them not just moral rights and wrongs but why these are wrong, so they have some answers when they get to university. I survived because my mother was sufficiently courageous to give a solid catechism to me when I got my first boyfriend and, although I threw it contemptuously aside when she gave it to me, I picked it up after she had gone and read it. With that understanding, after an internal wrestle with myself, I gave up the boyfriend instead of the faith. When I discovered the traditional Mass, the treasury of the Church's music (chant and polyphony), Catholic literature, and Catholic philosophy—all these riches of the Church—I, and many of my generation were angry with the previous generation who had thrown out all these things. They received it all, but they didn't give us a chance. Everything should be passed on to each generation and they can choose for themselves what they will keep or not. No generation should throw away the patrimony of the next generation, for these riches of the Church belong to EVERY generation. They didn't belong to the sixties generation to keep or throw away on everyone's behalf. Music is in a particularly dire state in the Church. Many Catholics don't even know what chant is. All they've ever heard is the pseudo-pop seventies 'hymns'. I'm embarrassed when I go past an Anglican parish and hear their beautiful organ and timeless hymns, while the guitars are jangling out in the Catholic Church. I'm over being angry now. My generation worked hard to restore all these things, and the fruit has been growth, faith, love for the Church, many vocations and joy.

At St [-]'s we have been blessed with excellent priests in recent times. Fr [-] has been a shining light and has become a personal friend of my wife and I.

I became Catholic at the age of 42, having no previous religion. The beauty of the Latin Mass at [-] was a very significant factor in my adoption of the Faith. I am also of the view that the values and freedoms we take for granted in a civilised society actually originate from Christianity. Seeing that as society has drifted away from Christianity that there has been a steady decline in these values (e.g. the sanctity of life, the freedom to speak what one holds to be true), I put two and two together and realised the necessity of adopting the Christian Faith—in the original church. I identify with St Francis being called to rebuild the Church, in that I was baptised at age 42, and thus was also slow to catch on to what God was calling me to do in this life.

I feel empty and gutted at the moment. I cannot see the point of going to church when we have priests from overseas who are taking our liturgy back to the 1950's. The Church needs a quantum shift in ideology.
I was raised as a strict Catholic, and we attended Mass every Sunday. I learned early on, that it was much more interesting when you got involved! I think some people are less effective at welcoming and including others, and I've found I'm feeling less driven and part of the family. It's a tough time in the Catholic Church at present. :(
I think I have been so lucky to have lived in Australia and always been well cared for and have enough money to live comfortably and because of this I have never been challenged in my beliefs. It is easy to believe when life is good.
I was at [-] College [-] when abuse occurred. I know the priests and brothers who behaved so badly however I also know those who were faithful to their calling. They as well as I were let down by our leadership of the Church. I still have my faith because I was not going to let the minority destroy my Church without a fight. I want to be positive about our future. If the leadership will not listen I remove my material support. I can be a good Catholic without a bishop but a bishop cannot be a good bishop without his or her parishes and community.
Because of my experience in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, my faith has deepened. I have experienced the charism of the Holy Spirit. I have witnessed miracles of healing, my son [-] had a miraculous healing. When you have three generations below you with less than a handful who are interested in the Church, there is cause for great despair. A story. Some years ago I went to a First Communion Mass at [-] (as I have done many times); Bishop [-] celebrated it and when it came time for the homily he gathered all the First Communicants in the space between the altar and the first pew, sat them on the floor and moved among them talking 'kid' talk: very effective, extremely effective. The following year we had Bishop [-]—a very good Homily—for adults only, but the kids lost interest within the first two minutes. The Church must remember that the kids are the future of our Church and must be pampered accordingly. The 'Come and See Family Masses are a great move—let's have them more frequently! It would be good for our 'upper level' (bishops and above) to take note of sporting clubs the world over and the attention they pay to promoting to kids—that's where the future lies in any major organisation! Also, let's have more women in the priesthood—and further up the ladder. It worries me that the Bible seems so based on the Muslim attitude to women and we are following that. It worries me too that Jesus didn't seem to do a lot to fight this attitude? Women have a lot to give and so many of us Catholic men seem to be afraid to allow them the opportunity to do so in our Church. Are we worried that they will take over? I am an earnest Catholic, attend Mass every Sunday, value my faith—but fear that I am one of a seriously declining congregation. As a lifelong Catholic with strong models of love and inclusion from family and community I have worked in community development with a focus on the Sermon on the Mount and Christ's challenge to think of approaching the last judgement with an eye on how I have treated his children. The Church has always and still does, provide a secure and trustworthy way of life for me. My personal relationship with Jesus was instant and transforming—opening up the Bible and filling me with love and joy at 35 years, even after a committed Catholic life. I was changed. My response is that insufficient time and discussion have been allowed in this parish. People should have been given more opportunity for discussion.
I grew up knowing that the fact I valued my faith meant that I was different. I loved my faith, but it was always a challenge that so few other young people had even a passing interest in the faith. Naturally, as I grew and explored my faith more, the number one question in my mind was trying to understand how this situation had come about. What had gone wrong? I can understand that some people have different answers to this question, but what has most shocked me is the fact that many in the Church leadership (especially the lay bureaucracy) don't believe anything has gone wrong! Particularly in the area of Catholic education, there is no acknowledgment of the crisis, let alone addressing of it. Sometimes it is even suggested that this is all part of a "new direction" God is leading the Church. It could not be more obvious that this new direction leads

straight to the Church's death. As someone who grew up attending near-empty Churches, alone in my faith, I feel like my experience of isolation that came with my Catholic faith is being pooh-poohed by the 'elite' of the Church who think their abstract (and very dated) theories and arrogant experiments which have brought the Church to the brink, are somehow more real than the glaringly obvious facts that any child can observe.
Coming into closer regular contact with priests through work in a hospital role, having discussions on a more equal level has changed my sense of the possibilities here. It is good to relate on a more human level and to also be able to inspire each other, without the ever present sense of power in the mix as happens when you speak with the priest after Mass.
Much of what we have heard over the last while in Church is apologies for sexual abuse. It is real but it has not imbued what our Catholic faith is about. Quite the opposite. If the Church is seriously going to grow and foster an engaged community, each diocese may need to embrace more tailored Masses that meet the modern day needs of the next generation for faith and spirituality. Is there room for a turbo Mass (yes we are tired, this generation is working harder than ever before and dual income professional families are reality), Taize Mass where we crave silence and spirituality, a music lovers version where we move off the current hymnal, a service with an intellectual flavour and one where there is testimony. And can we have apps to go with these services—so no matter where you live you can access them?
A bishop was having a marvellous response with all his flock young and old and his successor reverted to an older conservative style and ten years of people's involvement was lost.
A change of bishop in our diocese saw a return to older conservative attitude and the loss of women in influence in education and governance.
My wife and I have been involved in the YCW, State and National level. We have been involved in running Pre Canas, we have participated in Marriage Encounter, Teams of Our Lady, etc... We are regular attendees, we are financial supporters of the Church, we have religious family members. We see the likes of Bishop [-], [-], [-], [-] etc. all should be an integral part of a very vibrant Church sitting on the sidelines of a very corrupt International Church. Time for the Australian bishops to grasp the nettle and decide to support and foster a National Church primarily Australian for Australians.
I have been born and raised as a conservative Roman Catholic, and have been an active member of the Church all my life. I have upheld the precepts of the Church all my life and I have always tried to live by the laws of the Church, and have found my involvement in the Church to be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. I am being challenged more and more every day to remain faithful to my religion.
I was brought up and evangelised within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. My parents ran a prayer group in [-] in the 1970's. Of the 6 kids in our family, all 6 regularly attend Church every weekend. 1 in a Pentecostal Church. The other 5 in Catholic parishes across NSW and Vic. It was at a retreat run by the Disciples of Jesus community in 1994 that I experienced the love of God in a tangible way for the first time. Through this encounter I understood that I was loved by God and it changed my life. After University I worked with the Youth Mission Team in [-] for 4 years. This was a wonderful experience of service, evangelisation and training. Since that time I have been working in Catholic schools (Primary and Secondary) in various towns across country Victoria and NSW. I have been the REC and 2 schools. For 6 years I worked with Fr [-] and the Stronger Team. This was a wonderful model of evangelisation that needed to be better supported by the Church Hierarchy. Now I am on the Sacramental Team and the Children's Liturgy Team in the parish of [-]. I want to serve God and work with God to show his love to young people. But the opportunities are limited within our Church. I love the sacraments. I love going to Mass. I love the forgiveness and grace received in Reconciliation. I love the sacrament of Marriage and feel incredibly blessed to be married in our Church and I continue to experience the love of God through the love of my wife and I serve God through service to my wife and kids.

I will turn 40 this year..... As child we went to Church every Sunday out of obligation. I learnt little to nothing at home about the gospel stories and we barely spoke about faith I completed all my sacraments of initiations though do not remember them well and felt disconnected at the moments I do remember (though the cake was always good....) I went to a Catholic high school and was taught religious education to a fairly high standard and expectation in [-] ([-] graduated in 1996) I felt unwelcome at our parish and spent my time in Mass looking at the hair styles and clothing of other teenagers I admired. At the death of my sole parent in 1996, I quickly disregarded any faith I had including removing the cross from her coffin I spent the next approximately eight years not participating in any religious activities. I met my husband through teaching at a Catholic school (where I had been employed with nothing owing to my faith background and was not an active part of the faith development of the school which barely existed). The influence and beauty of his faith caused me to reconsider faith as a real option, I had reached a very low point in my own life as well and felt called to do something different. I have actively worked at rebuilding my faith with the support of my husband. We have worked tirelessly over the last thirteen years to journey on our faith together, we both have a masters in theology and teach at Catholic schools specifically in the area of Religious education and youth ministry. We work with our parish community to run children's ministry services at three different age groups for our Sunday morning Mass and 1 group at our later Sunday morning Mass, we are part of the sacramental team, prayer team, youth ministry team and Catholic schools groups. We support our diocese in their endeavours to engage youth in the life of the Church but find road blocks of funding, access and change at most turns. We are bringing up our family in a wonderful parish in [-], we moved from here for a few years only to move back specifically for the parish. We want to instil in our children love of the Church and God and help them to know they are loved in return but our fears of the Church being buried seem to be getting more real each year. I do not want the Church to be what it was for me as I grew up, when times got tough I threw it all in and know I am blessed not to have been swallowed by the world, when times get tough for my children I want their faith to be the aspect of their lives they turn to instead of run away from. It takes a village to raise a child and I want that village to be our Church, not the outside world of materialism and selfishness.

I went to a Catholic primary school and a Catholic secondary school and in the later years we got 1 lesson in religious instruction every 2 weeks. That wasn't even instruction really, it was like a discussion of current events and rarely had any religious content. The failure of the Catholic education system is of my primary concern as I learnt most of what I know from books and tapes from overseas. I have personally sponsored 8 people into the Catholic Church including an Anglican priest and love the Catholic Church. With the issue of the Universal Catechism and a correct understanding of authority in the Church and doctrine a lot could be accomplished.

[-] 12yr old, I like coming to Mass because I listen to the hymns, gospels and the homily, I would like more Masses especially Sat vigil. I like going to confession because it makes me warm and fuzzy inside.

[-] 8yrs old. Sometimes I like coming to Mass, I love and enjoy celebrating Christmas—Jesus' Birthday and St Nicolas' birthday 6 Dec. We also continue to squeeze in the rosary every day. Confession is important if you do something bad you can rewind time and not do it again. I don't want to be a priest because I want to fight fires, I would have to be on-call all day and I would not be able to be a good priest.

I spent many years, over 30 in a Religious Order. When I left I had a huge wake up. Is this (Sunday Mass) the only real access lay people have to Spirituality? I was fortunate to know where I could go to meet this need (through study, spirituality courses etc.). Thankfully opportunities for lay people to delve further into spirituality and faith are more accessible. Still lay people do struggle to access funds to attend to these needs. Catholic teachers have access to professional faith development funds however often lay people have to pay for themselves. I grew up in a parish where 'Australia's worst paedophile Catholic priest' was parish priest. The destruction of people's

faith both within the Catholic Church and within the town is heartbreaking. Generations of people have stopped attending Church regularly and of seeking the consolation of the Church at critical times in their lives. I know people from outside this parish have visited and reported that the faithful are continuing on (often this means 'not talking about it') as before this dreadful era. Yet I know the damage that has been done and the way people suffer silently. Until there is real change in the Church, an upheaval of outmoded processes and procedures.....nothing will change. People have a huge need to feel cared for. We must seek out better ways of ministering to all.

I remember I was approximately 16 years of age. I was having morning tea with the local PP. A young priest in his early thirties I think. I asked him why he never mentioned contraception in his homilies. He responded by saying that he was worried that it might upset some of the other parishioners and they might stop going to his Mass. I didn't know how to respond that day, but I do remember thinking later that it was so sad. He thought he was doing a greater service keeping people in the pews rather than speaking the truth about the intrinsic evil of contraception. Of course, it wasn't until a few years later I read the passage in the Bible (John 6:51) where Jesus is reaffirming the reality of the eating of his flesh and blood in order to be saved. Jesus must have known He was going to lose a large proportion of disciples over this, and yet He spoke the truth anyway. And yet He stood and watched them walking away grumbling and disagreeing. It seems as if the Catholic Church in Australia is trying to win a popularity contest rather than being the safe guard and conveyor of Truth.

My experience of my local parish has been central in my own journey of faith. I had a very positive experience of parish. As such, I believe that we need to do all that we can to ensure that others have this same experience. I think each of our parishes can become much better at this. If someone is new at Mass, for instance, I wonder how many people go up to this person and say hello to make them feel welcome. If young people are involved in a liturgy, I wonder how much follow up and encouragement there is with these youngsters to invite them to be part of our parish life regularly. I wonder how much effort priests and parish pastoral workers put into encouraging more people to help out in our parishes. How well do they get to know their people? How are they encouraging them to say 'yes' to some small contribution they are comfortable with in the parish. So often we leave so much to so few in our parishes. This is not intended to be critical but it is an observation I often make. Also, I wonder what impact there is on faith communities and individuals when there is no Sunday Mass or liturgy of the Word and Communion service in a parish. Speaking from personal experience in my own parish in [-], there was one Sunday when we were unable to have our weekly 9am Sunday Mass at St [-]'s, [-]. This usually attracts about 100 people. I know that on this particular Sunday there were many people who came to the Church for Mass only to see the doors closed. I also know of many others who simply did not bother to go to Mass elsewhere because there was nothing offered at St [-]'s that Sunday. There are others I know in the parish, who because of their health or lack of mobility/transport were unable to go to Mass elsewhere. All these people missed out on this particular Sunday. Parishioners were disheartened by this given that there were people capable of leading a Liturgy of the Word and Communion service. These parishioners included a Mercy Sister, a Parish Pastoral Council member and Scripture group leader and the most faithful 85-year-old sacristan you could meet. It was obvious that the people wanted it. They understood that a priest couldn't be with them that Sunday. Yet their love of their parish and their desire to worship Jesus together as a community inspired them to want to have a liturgy of the Word and Communion service as opposed to a week off. The parish I belong to is a special one. Positive experiences of faith in this community for me have included after Mass cuppas, good liturgy, involvement with St Vinnie's, youth events, parish barbecues, prayer groups, parish pastoral council involvement, parish visitation and more. We have also had inspiring priests and parish pastoral associates. Other positive experiences of faith beyond the parish have included World Youth Day, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, youth ministry professional development gatherings, Diocesan Retreats, Rallies and [-] Youth Masses.

When I returned to retire in a country diocese, the bishop at the time set up a Diocesan Pastoral Council. It was comprised of highly educated, enthusiastic and faith filled people from the diocese elected by parishioners. It set the direction with the bishop for the diocese and supported him. When the next bishop arrived he refused to re-instate the Diocesan Pastoral Council in spite of many requests from his priests and people. There was no reason given and the people had no one to whom they could turn. Is this servant leadership? As a leader of a Congregation, I was obliged by Canon Law to have a Council—a very wise provision. Wouldn't it be helpful for bishops to have a group of suitably qualified people (not just priests) who could share the burden of leadership? In the same diocese, with the blessing of the bishop, a group of priests, Religious and Lay people spent months preparing a most detailed document to outline the process for preparing and appointing lay leaders in rural parishes where there was no resident priest. When the leadership changed in the diocese the initiative was ignored. These are not isolated examples of people being treated with disdain and gradually feeling there are very reduced ways for them to use their baptismal gifts to work with their bishop to build up their communities.

[-]'s exemplary faith in the light of his rejection by the Church and the Police Church. The grace and dignity with which my husband dealt with his dying and death. Belonging to Teams—A Married Couples Movement—for 38 years—the place through which our faith has grown as individuals and couples. This group nurtures us more in prayer and hope than the institutional Church has ever done.

Yes. I was involved in a very serious accident when I was 19 and our parish priest as well as priests from my old school (Jesuits) visited me in the hospital. My school shaped me to a large extent (after my parents) and these visits consolidated my good feelings. I had had a very negative experience when much younger with the Christian Brothers and my father was wise enough to see that I need a change of environment (hence my move to the Jesuits).

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 Diocese of Sandhurst.

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	156
Canada	1
Germany	1
Italy	1
Netherlands	2
New Zealand	1
Philippines	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	4
United States of America	2
Zimbabwe	1
Not stated	33
Total	203

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
Galen Catholic College	1,280
St Mary of the Angels College	680
Kerang, Cohuna and Pyramid Hill Catholic Parishes	300
St Liborius Parish	200
St Mary's Parish Echuca	150
Responses from St. Mary's Parishioners, Mooroopna, Vic	70
Sacred Heart Primary School, Yarrawonga	60
St Marys Myrtleford	60
Sacred Heart Parish Tatura	53
St Kilian's parishioners	52
Sandhurst Religious Education Coordinators	50
Sandhurst Religious Education Coordinators	50
St Mary's Myrtleford	50
Wangaratta Catholic Parishes Plenary Council Listening and Dialogue Sessions	50
Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Bright 3741	45
Diocese of Sandhurst	35
Diocese of Sandhurst	35
St Joseph's Primary School	34
Marian College Myrtleford	32
Mrs	32
Teams –Bendigo Sector	27
FCJ Benalla	24
St Vincent de Pauls Society	20
MSC Adult Faith Group	16
Teams of Our Lady Bendigo	16
St John's	15
Wodonga Charismatic Prayer Group	15
SVDP - Wangaratta	14
Dodd family	14
St Augustine's Parish	13
MSC Adult Faith Group	13
Teams	12
Mercy Place aged care home.	11
Teams Of Our Lady	11
St Anne's College	11
St Joseph's Catholic Parish, Beechworth, Victoria – Working Group	11
Yr nine RE class Galen Catholic College	11
Teams of Our Lady	10
Cornella small group from Rushworth Parish	10
Stronger Youth	10
Teams of Our Lady (Team 4, Bendigo).	10

Name of group	Group size
Faith circles	10
St Brendan's Young Adults Group	10
Catholic Charismatic Renewal	10
St Therese's Parish Kennington	10
Teams of Our Lady Team 11 Bendigo	9
The Sandhurst Diocese Aboriginal Education Yarning Circle Group	9
Sandhurst Charismatic Renewal	9
Teams - A Married Couples Movement	9
Monday Group	8
St Augustine's Parish	8
St Kilians Parish Forum	7
St Killians Parish Forum	7
St Kilians small group	7
Rushworth Parish small group	7
CLC	7
St Kilian's Parish Forum	6
St Killians Parish Forum	6
Teams of Our Lady	6
Family Group	6
Sunday discussion group	6
St Mel's Primary School	6
St Kilian's Choir	6
St Kilians	6
Sandhurst Diocese	5
St Kilians small group1	5
PPC	5
St Kilian's small group	5
St Kilian's Small Group	5
Mothers' Prayers	5
January Small Group	5
Small Group	5
St Kilian's Small Group	5
SIP small group	5
small group in Shepparton	5
St. Patrick's Wangaratta	4
St Mary's Primary School	4
St Kilians Parish	4
Saint Augustine of Canterbury Monastic House	3
Wodonga Catholic Parish	2
St Kilians Parish	2
Teams of Our Lady	Not Stated

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