



Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

A Report to the Diocese of Toowoomba

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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

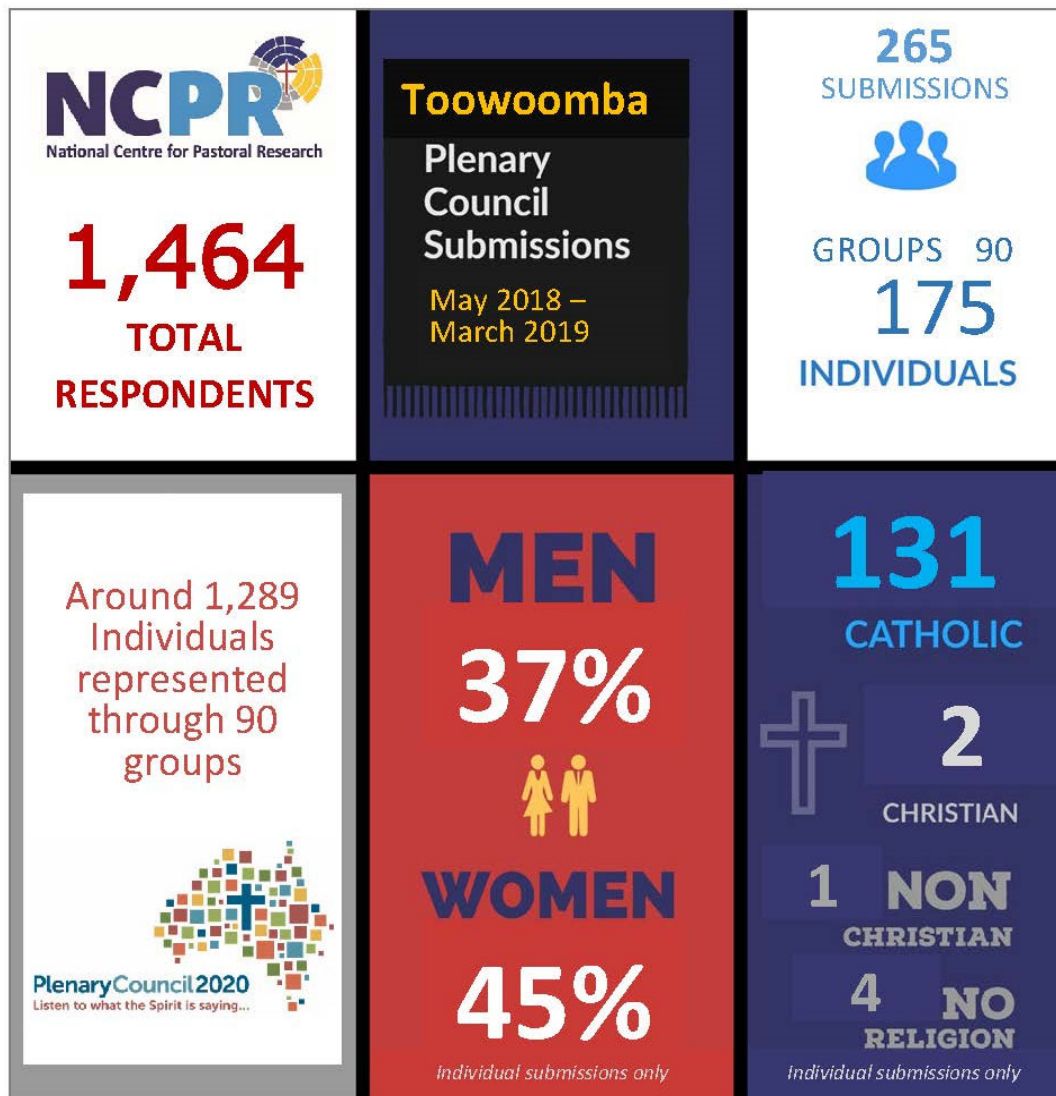
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Diocesan Submissions Summary Snapshot: May 2018—March 2019



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 - Toowoomba

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 Toowoomba, we received a total of 265 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 151 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 45 were unsure if they had. About 56 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 265 submissions, 90 submissions were from groups or organisations and 175 submissions were from individuals. There were 1,289 people represented through the 90 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 1,464.

Table 1: Number of Submissions	
Total number of submissions received	265
<i>Participated in Listening & Dialogue Encounter?</i>	
Yes	151
No	56
Not sure	45
Not stated	13
Total	265
Submissions received from groups or organisations	90
Submissions received from individuals	175
Total	265

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 175 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 Toowoomba. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 51 per cent (89) 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 (17 responses).

At the close of submissions, there were 21 individual submissions received from those aged under 25.

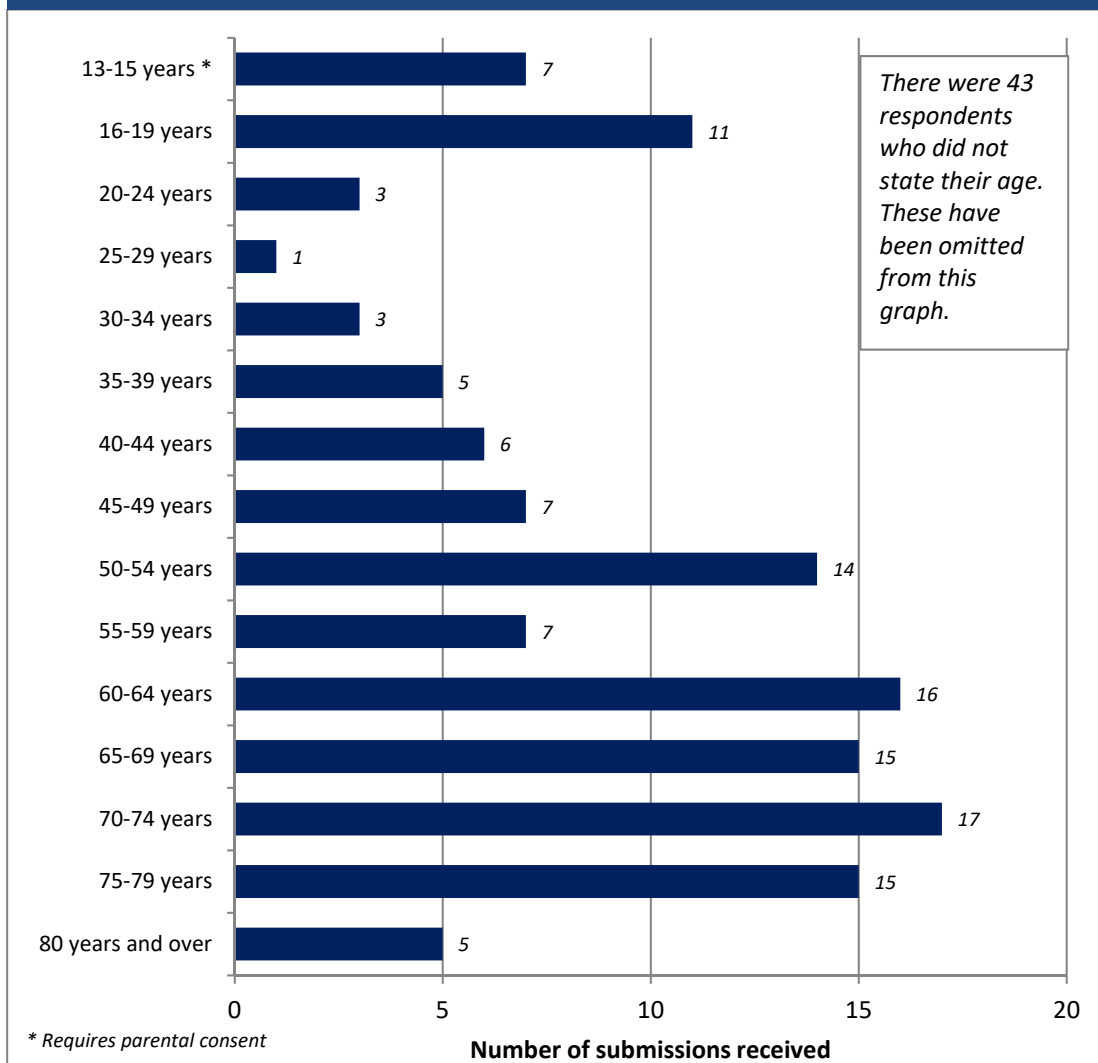
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were 11 individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

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 seven individual submissions made from this age group in your diocese.

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

13-15 years *	7
16-19 years	11
20-24 years	3
25-29 years	1
30-34 years	3
35-39 years	5
40-44 years	6
45-49 years	7
50-54 years	14
55-59 years	7
60-64 years	16
65-69 years	15
70-74 years	17
75-79 years	15
80 years and over	5
Not stated	43
Total	175

** Requires parental consent*

Fig. 1: Age groups (individual responses only)

Sex of Respondents

Under half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (45%), while a further 37 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 65 men and 79 women who made submissions. Nine respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 22 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)

Female	79
Male	65
Prefer not to say	9
Not stated	22
Total	175

Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (72%) were born in Australia. Just under ten per cent came from other countries, while around 19 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	126	72.0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7	4.0
Other Countries	9	5.1
Not stated	33	18.9
Total	175	100.0

Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	126	72.0
Other English-speaking country	11	6.3
Non-English-speaking country	5	2.9
Not stated	33	18.9
Total	175	100.0

Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	106	60.6
Other English speaking country	14	8.0
Non-English speaking country	10	5.7
Not stated	45	25.7
Total	175	100.0

Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	100	57.1
Other English-speaking country	16	9.1
Non-English-speaking country	13	7.4
Not stated	46	26.3
Total	175	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	133
Not stated	41
Total	175

Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 175 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 131 respondents (75%) were Catholic. Two respondents were from other Christian denominations while there was one from a non-Christian religion. A further 37 respondents did not state their religion and four respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)		Person	Percent
Catholic		131	74.9
Other Christian:			
Uniting Church		1	0.6
Other Christian		1	0.6
Non Christian:			
Other religion		1	0.6
No religion		4	2.3
Not stated		37	21.1
Total		175	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 **105** respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were eight respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while 12 respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further six 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	58	46	1	105
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	6	2	0	8
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	3	5	0	8
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	2	2	0	4
Other	2	2	1	5
Not stated	0	1	0	1
Total	71	58	2	131

GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 90 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 1,289 individuals were represented through these groups. However, six 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 79 group submissions provided a group name, 11 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 St Anthony's Parish, Toowoomba with around 400 members. There were also a number of other parish and school groups such as St Joseph's College with 70 participants and St Mary's Parish Charleville and St Patrick's Augathella with 55 members. There were seven other groups with 25 members or more.

Table 8 : Group submissions from the diocese

Name of group	Group size
St Anthony's Parish, Toowoomba	400
St Joseph's College	70
St John's School	60
St Mary's Parish Charleville and St Patrick's Augathella	55
St Saviour's College	40
St Mary's Parish	35
St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe	30
All Saints Parish	25
St. John's Senior Students Roma Qld.	25
Basanovic and Birchley Family	25
Sacred Heart Parish Cunnamulla	17
Our Lady of Lourdes Newtown Friday Group	17
St Joseph's Secondary School, Stanthorpe	14
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	14
St Mary's Parish	14
Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office	14
Our Lady of Lourdes, Toowoomba - Group 2	12
Mary Of Southern Cross Plenary Council (Youth and Families Focus)	12
St Mary's Parish	12
St Thomas More's Parish Pastoral Council	11

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 50-69 years age group was the largest group represented with 458 members. This was followed by the group aged 70 and over with 289 members. There was no age provided for around six 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	114
20 - 29 years	105
30 - 49 years	276
50 - 69 years	458
70 and over	289
Unknown	6
Total	1,248

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

Of the total 1,248 group members whose sex was reported, 60 per cent (744) were female and 40 per cent (504) 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	744
Male	504
Total	1,248

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



RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1

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

THEMES DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

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

Within each of these four 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)
 - *Care for neighbour* (p. 36)
 - *Greater focus on the Word of God* (p. 31)
 - *Being a witness in society* (p. 34)
 - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching* (p. 32)
 - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God* (p. 29)
- Leadership and Church governance (Chapter 7)
 - *Greater role for women* (p. 83)
 - *New model of Church, diocese, parish* (p. 93)
 - *Greater involvement of the laity* (p. 84)
 - *Ending clericalism* (p. 80)
 - *New leadership and governance model* (p. 91)
 - *Greater leadership from bishops* (p. 87)
 - *Working together in unity* (p. 95)
 - *Greater leadership from priests* (p. 88)
 - *More formation and support for priests* (p. 89)
- 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)
- 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)*

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

- *More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse (p. 102)*
- *Focus on ecumenism (p. 129)*
- *Sharing the faith with others (p. 128)*
- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *Modernise Church teachings (p. 169)*
- *Mass to be appealing to youth and children (p. 54)*
- *Stronger parish communities (p. 156)*
- *Positive Church Public Relations (p. 168)*
- *Inclusion of the divorced and remarried (p. 46)*
- *Listening to one another more (p. 136)*
- *Outreach to the wider community (p. 123)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p. 151)*

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 40 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.

Malachi ch 3 v 6, "I am the Lord, I change not." Matthew ch 22 vs 37...40, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment; and the second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." I don't believe the Lord is asking anything different of us than to love Him, and love all people with all the means at our disposal.

That people be encouraged, supported to be a missionary Church—to take seriously "go in peace to love and serve the Lord" in their day-to-day encounters. That the prayers of the liturgy be rewritten in everyday language and not too long. Many of the current prayers do not touch people where they are at. That it be mandatory for any man considering priesthood to have lived life in the real before going to the seminary. He should have attended university or gotten a trade and lived and worked and earned his own money to know what real people do before he lives the privileged life of a priest. I would also suggest that he lives at home or in a unit or shared house and attends the seminary for particular subjects as if he was doing a theology degree. That when he does his pastoral year in a parish, a parish team's recommendations or other suggestions be considered seriously. I do not believe that in the ordination ceremony when the bishop says we have discussed with the people of God the suitability of this man for priesthood that the ordinary parishioners are consulted. In every parish, the talents of the parishioners should be utilised as the priest does not have all the talents that are required for the functioning of a parish. That men and women be commissioned to be leaders of liturgy in a parish where there is no priest except for the occasional visiting deanery priest rather than importing clergy from overseas countries who do not understand the Australian way of life (e.g. respect for women) and also do not speak good

English. There is more to leadership of a parish and liturgy than having a man at the altar whom no one can understand.

The reducing number of ordained men in our country has forced us to reconsider leadership of our Church in local communities, in our dioceses and in our Church nationally. We live at a time when many of our laity are as well educated in theology and Church matters if not better than many of the few clergy we have. Many lay people have a broad experience of leadership in their present careers and along with relevant education in the field of Church and theology can be and are already well equipped to lead faith communities both locally and on a state or national level. To some extent this is already happening in management levels but not in the conducting of liturgy as much. I think that the Church needs to reconsider what it means to be ordained and who can be ordained—whether men or women. Many lay-led liturgies I have attended in the past have been life giving and spiritually nourishing. On the other hand, I have attended liturgies that have been well planned by creative and talented liturgy teams only to have the ordained priest either not follow the script or deliver a homily that is neither relevant or spiritually nourishing—often it has been obviously downloaded from the internet with euphemisms that do not even relate to this country or the people's life experience. I therefore believe that in this country, God is calling us to reconsider what it means to be ordained in ministry in our Church both locally and nationally.

To be able to answer all the questions and doubts put forward by the so-called science oriented, blind science believers of the modern world in a scientific way. Approach them in a non-judgemental way, just like Jesus had done for the Sinful woman brought by Jews, to win their mind, heart and brain for Jesus. The younger generations now are going through a lot of psychological, emotional and ideological confusions and frustrations with identity crisis more than any previous generations due to the immense input of controversies they are getting through social network. They are forced to look into Church with suspicion and the things are made worse by many negative role models in Church which has been generalised by the modern media. Modern youngsters tempt to believe that science can help them all through the life which in reality is a myth which they will come to realise late in life when there is little time to enjoy the Godly beauties of this world. For this these youngsters need God fearing, successful, science oriented (can correlate science with Gods teachings and deeds) models rather than fighting against science.... This needs model Christian families getting strong and successful in God's wisdom and prayers and these families can be role models for the younger generations. The new generation is getting stupidly rebellious to fight against all the norms set by old generations because of their hatred to the hypocrisy and dishonesty set by their Christian parents, priests and Christian leaders as well as the on and off corrupt alliance of Church with politics... The new generation should feel that Church is for them and not only for its institutions and thereby making them feel that Jesus is for them, and they can seek consolation in Church in their confusions and frustrations...

I don't know what He is asking of us. But I think the answer will be found in Scripture and in particular the New Testament where Christ has shown us the 'new law'. After all, He is 'the way, the truth, and the life' (Jn). We need to go closer to Him so we can hear where He planned for us to go as His Church. He will not let us go astray. This is probably not much use as I am simply giving my thoughts. Sounds 'old hat' and typical of an 'oldie'. While 'old', I am still working full

time as I cannot financially afford to retire - 'floods and fire and famine of Australia'. The Church belongs to old and young, to us all. We cannot ignore any one, nor favour one to the exclusion of the other. Each age has its own charisma and contribution. That makes us a whole. The Church belongs to the 'old' who hold the traditions and links back to our heritage. It also belongs to the young who can carry the 'torch', the life forward for future generations. We each have a relevant and important place in the Church.

I have already responded once. At that time, I was unsure about his answer. After thinking, praying, reading, and 'listening' to the Lord I believe that God is asking that we CHRIST-IFY the world, our country. We do not need to 'modernize' the Church, but to Christ-ify the world. How do we do this? Perhaps the words of Archbishop Coleridge, ACBC President, that he would make sure that 'Jesus is at the heart of everything' are relevant here. If we can but make Christ the centre of our deliberations, listening, yearnings, etc. then we can CHRIST-IFY the world. Christ is the centre of all our hopes and struggles, confusions etc. How can we make sure that Christ is at the heart of everything? A big question.

(a) A Church that is more responsive the needs of our modern pluralistic society. (b) A Church that is welcoming, open, compassionate, understanding and motivated to action gospel values particularly at the grass roots level. (c) A Church that actively espouses ecumenism, has a vision for the future and is prepared to seriously consider the ordination of women and takes positive action in promoting and fostering ecumenism.

Evangelisation: The Church should look for the easy targets that they can focus on. Our schools are the greatest asset that we have as a Catholic Church. Our teachers are the front line of our evangelisation. Many of our teachers are not "active Catholics." Our task is to evangelise our teachers who are in control of our children for six hours a day, for twelve years. Through our children, the teachers can reach the parents and our families. We need specialised teams to go around the schools and evangelise our teachers through workshops. They can return to the school three months later and perhaps four times a year, to see how the teachers are doing. This is a ten-year program. This would be the most effective way to reach out to our families who now see our Catholic schools as "glorified" private schools. The first stage could start in our Universities who are training our future teachers and this is not happening.

For the local church to be more relevant and appear more connected with the world around us.

God is asking our Church to be unconditionally welcoming and non-judgmental to all. Our current practice is hypocritical in particular our treatment of the marginalized e.g. involvement of divorcees in the Mass, judgmental of lifestyle and religious denomination.

True inclusion and acceptance of all. Build community through relationships and knowledge of parish members. Welcoming all into our parishes. Welcoming lay people (including women) into positions of leadership. Honouring and inviting committed laypersons to be celebrated and included in faith leadership.

To promote authentic relationships in a growing digital / virtual relational world. Deepen understandings of relationships to promote authentic personal contact and belonging to community.

Present the truth with charity. To do this we need to guide members on key issues and related messages. We then need to encourage all members of the Church to be active in promoting the truth and, where necessary, objecting to misrepresentations of the truth. The ACBC has made some good and useful statements on recent issues but these have not been getting appropriate coverage in public, commercial and social media fora. Even those who present as Christians including those who present as Catholics have been swept up in secular and social media storms and have been disinclined or even opposed to presenting authentic Catholic teachings. The most graphic examples are in the redefinition of marriage where the ACBC and the Australian Christian Lobby made available some good information but it was not taken up by the media. Those who presented Christian values were bullied by trolls and not supported by grass roots Christians. E.G. Dr David Van Gend, Margaret Court and Israel Folau. These people presented the truth with charity and got seriously abused and bullied. On another agenda, the media and many anti-Christian lobby groups have continually associated abuse with the Catholic clergy. Although some grave mistakes were made, these are dis-proportionally covered by media - E.G. any abuse involving a Catholic priest will include the word Catholic at least four times and the story will air at allegation, court and sentencing. For other institutions, the name of the institution is usually mentioned once or twice and the story aired only once. In abortion debates, there is no media coverage of the consideration of 2 human beings. There is no presentation of the medical risks to the mother. There is no mention of the rights of the biological father - contrasting with the apology to the Aboriginal Peoples for past separation of children from their biological parents. As a parent, I am now financially penalised for not having my children immunised with vaccines that have been developed from human remains (aborted babies). A growing body of science is showing the adverse effects of many vaccines on children such as increased incidence of autism. Despite these "truths" qualified professionals willing to present information to contribute to public debate are refused visas by both sides of government for fear of impact on the economy and the Australian Medical Association. The truth on many ethical, moral and event scientific issues is being ignored or misrepresented and Catholics and the Church is silent or even complicit. On masculinity and femininity, the Church has a rich teaching from JP II but we are collectively standing by while birth certificates and drivers' licences are discontinuing the use of M or F for fear of offending those who choose to adopt a sociological or psychological definition of male and female over scientific or medical realities. Please God give us the courage, the skills and the love to be able to present the truth with charity.

1. The strongest feeling in the group was the need to restore trust in the Church, in particular its leadership because of the following:

Ø The sexual abuse and the cover-ups which have irreparably damaged the lives of vulnerable people and put the reputation of the institution before compassion.

Ø The hypocrisy of lives that didn't/don't reflect what they preach

Ø The failure of clergy to preach the Word of God in a way that touches God's lives, often giving the impression that they have little depth of spirituality or commitment. The people of God want their priests to communicate a lived experience of encounter with Presence, not intellectual ideas and concepts which do nothing to touch one's spirit.

2. Bring an end to clericalism, the "boys' club" mentality, by working towards servant leadership rather than authoritarian leadership; encourage genuine participative, collaborative leadership which embraces the gifts of all, both male and female; recognize the decision-making ability of women and refrain from relegating women to menial tasks.

3. Foster a welcoming, inclusive, compassionate, non-judgmental community where love takes precedence over law. We want a Church that is outward looking, not centred self-preservation.

Ø There is the need to widen our hearts and embrace with compassion those members of our community who are suffering as the result of domestic abuse, marriage breakdown divorce or situations that are regarded as irregular according to current Church teaching – often people in these situations have been made to feel like lepers and have experienced isolation from the community.

4. There is a need at all levels to dialogue and listen to all with respect; to allow freedom for all to speak their truth and to be listened to without being judged or criticized .

5. There is a need to emphasise personal encounter with God and to highlight relationship and connectedness to the God in whom we live and move and have our being, to the earth, to other races and religious traditions, to acknowledge our oneness rather than highlight doctrine and enforce doctrinal orthodoxy.

6. We need to find new ways of expressing our faith in a way which is meaningful and relevant to people. So much of our Church language is archaic and directed to an "out there God" rather than an indwelling God. Our theology and liturgy need to be expressed in a way which makes sense with the findings of modern science if we are to speak to people of today.

7. We need to emphasise encounter with Christ and allow our lives to be energised by this encounter. We need to nurture small groups where people share their lives and experience the presence of Christ in their midst. We also need greater flexibility in liturgy so that it speaks to the needs of those participating.

To make the Church relevant in our Australian culture by rebuilding trust in the Church hierarchy and by demonstrating that they will work collaboratively with the faithful.

We, as a group, unanimously agreed that God is asking us in Australia to "Preserve the TRUTH of the Church unadulterated (that is not watered down). The TRUTH instituted by Christ Himself. We need to focus on the essentials and preserve these. These TRUTHS are timeless and unequivocal. We need to revive the understanding of these eternal truths which Christ our Saviour made clear when He walked this earth. We should not 'water down' the essentials to please man or make it easier to belong to the Church. Reviving this understanding will help the Church to respond to "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age ... [in] their journey to the kingdom of their Father." (Gaudium et Spes – Vat II The Church in the Modern World.) We felt that only by preserving the TRUTHS that Christ gave to us – He, the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn

14:6) - could we meet, listen to and respond to/meet the needs of the people in the modern world. There are many things which are 'uncomfortable' in Christ's message to people in the modern world. We cannot and should not water down His message. We need to discover/rediscover what it is we value in our Church and find ways to respond to His call to 'eternal life', in this busy, complex world, and not water down His message or the terms of our commitment.

We need a Holy Spirit led Church which belongs to everyone. The Holy Spirit needs to be more prominent in our Church life. There needs to be a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit who breathes life into the Church. The Father and Son are very evident in our Church life, but the Holy Spirit should be more evident in our everyday practice of our Church life. Faith, our faith, should not be taken for granted, it is a gift. The Church belongs to everyone, young and old, rich and poor, strong and weak. The hopes and aspirations of each group need to be heard, respected and supported by all. Those things in the Church that are precious to the old need to be respected by the young, and the different needs of the young need to be respected by the old. Many of the older Catholics treasure some of the devotions, such as the Rosary, and these should be supported and respected by other groups. On the other hand, we need to be open to the different needs of younger people. Our Church, like a family, embraces the differences of each generation. No group can be ignored. We need to be more ecumenical, recognizing other churches and emphasizing what we have in common rather than those things in which we differ.

How can we increase the youth involvement in our Church? We need to give the youth a voice; Do youth feel welcomed as part of their parish?; Flexibility with traditions, e.g. open air nuptials; how to make Mass more inclusive to people of other faiths; church needs to be a meeting place to share the Eucharist - not restrictive but welcoming.

*Ordain women

*Married clergy

*More lay involvement in management of the Church

*Adherence to the Gospel (refer St Francis of Assisi)

* Reduction of and less emphasis on bureaucracy in the Church

*More action re disadvantaged and refugees

*More emphasis on role of Holy Spirit in the Church

It's time to address the ever dwindling numbers in our congregations and identify why so many of our youth fail to practice. We reward excellence in Sport and academia but rarely do we reward mediocrity. I think God loves us all.

I believe that the future path of the Church should be plotted by learning from the misadventures of the past 50 years. I am from the generation who is typically called the millennials. I have no nostalgia about the past, as I never experienced it. Neither do I believe that it was not in need of change. I have a [desire] to have a healthy Church for myself and my children and I see that as a fruitful direction. I would encourage the plenary council to consider more reverent liturgy like

those experienced prior to the Second Vatican Council. I believe that millennial generation desire for "authenticity" would be better served by a liturgy acknowledging God as transcendent and sacred rather than the current practise of focusing the community. I would like high quality catechesis at a parish and school level. I believe that the evangelical opportunities that exist in the Catholic education system is currently a missed opportunity. Most Catholic families I know are unwilling to send their children to the Catholic education system for fear that they will lose their Faith, as the previous generation did, rather than be well catechised or supported in the Faith. I would envisage a system of accountability for bishops, archbishops, cardinals and even the pope in the event of credible accusations of child sexual abuse or misconduct at any age. Unfortunately, even the pope has lost credibility in recent years for management of abuse accusation and a solution is woefully overdue. For some time I had believed that the problems with the sexual abuse crisis was largely in the past. In recent years as I hear developments in the US in particular I am concerned that this is not the full story and there are still people in places of influence within the Church that are protecting their own interests at the expense of the Church and causing scandal. I could name a few high profile examples however the claims made in the "Viagno letter" are of particular concerns as it names the Pope as being complicit. I am aware that the Plenary Council will address the Australian Church rather than the Vatican however this weighs heavily on my mind and many of the faithful I am sure. The Church in Australia must make particular effort this evil is uprooted so to stop causing the damage that it is to the Church.

In respect to liturgy (1) to re-enliven the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially Communal Rite as the examination of conscience has a wider spectrum (e.g. care of environment). (2) Words used in liturgies—for children, using meaningful language that is applicable to relevant ages; and to review of number of times during a Mass, that we ask for forgiveness—is once not enough?! (3) Faith Education: it seems to stop at end of schooling! Adult faith education, as we are people of the gospel, to be offered more widely, to encourage reading, discussion and prayer. Make Faith/ religion an acceptable topic of social conversation.

With reference to music and to rituals: (1) to ensure that music which is chosen and played in ceremonies, including Mass, is liturgically correct, so that the music/hymn enhances the particular part of the ceremony; (2) to relate a funeral service to the deceased person's life and to the understanding of the family and friends who gather to celebrate that life; (3) to make EVERY 'Church ceremony' an opportunity for non-regular attendees/non-Church goers to experience a positive image of 'Church'.

I feel that he is asking us to show more compassion for and with other people, regardless of their religious beliefs. I also feel that some of our religious clergy get too tied up with dogma and rules and less about love for one another as in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. I also feel that our Church elders hang on to the standards of 2000 years ago about female priests and married priests; particularly of the latter when priests were married until several hundred years ago when the rules were changed! I feel that our Church is too male dominated and therefore needs to be more inclusive, particularly in relation to the role of women. We need to acknowledge more the needs of youth, particularly in relation to liturgy, as I hear so often that they find the liturgy of the Mass boring!

I think He is probably asking that we draw closer to Him, become more aware of His presence in our lives and come to understand more deeply His great redemptive work for all mankind—the great act of Redemption which He made available to ALL generations not just the Apostles at the last supper—the supreme act of Worship and the only one worthy of our God! As an older person I am afraid that we will 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. Our Church, founded by Jesus Christ, has developed its own culture (a very complex concept) just as nations and countries have developed and consolidated their own cultures. A culture carries the treasures of each of the centuries while reflecting the changes which are 'growth' over those time periods. Culture gives 'identity'. We, as a Church, need, not to lose our identity. We 'older' people are criticized for being opposed to change. Get real, we have lived through so many changes in our 'lives', more than those who criticize us for being opposed to change. Only those who have not lived through so many changes in society could make such a criticism. Older people are not opposed to change—but as we age we become very much aware of what is essential and what is not and we do in fact cling to what we see as 'essential' and not just superficial, peripheral or temporary. The great oak is not great because it is continually cut down. It is great because its growth has emerged from its centre. It builds on what went before. Our Church has grown from its centre and we need to be very much aware of the essence of our faith—re-discover those things that are essential. And make sure we do not water them down! But on the other hand we do need to discern what really is not essential. Sometimes the essentials are enhanced by practices which help us to focus on the essentials. Take for example, vestments at Mass. Some people claim that they are anachronistic. In my view the vestments point to the solemnity. Liveries are still very much a function of modern society—police wear uniforms when on duty, master chefs also wear a specific livery, we find that in the world of Art, Opera, Drama, the performance is enhanced by the costumes. So these are not old hat. All these liveries appeal to the senses and give a more authentic experience, enhancing the engagement with the performances etc. The vestments at Mass, in my opinion, accentuate the 'otherness' of the celebrating priest who is in fact representing Christ as He offers his perfect act of worship, so that we can in fact be present with Him in this supreme act of worship. Perhaps, we as a Church need to actively 'educate' our members about the essential mysteries of our faith so that they may appreciate the full extent of these mysteries. When Catholics describe lay liturgies as 'Mass without a consecration', it shows a fundamental misunderstanding of this precious mystery. We need deep education about the key mysteries of our faith.

I believe that God would be asking us to be kind to each other. Respecting each other's differences.

1) That the theology of the Sacrament of Marriage be reviewed, overhauled, made NEW. (2) that the circumstances of annulment of a marriage also be renewed, and more focus put on the person who is seeking the annulment; and the consequences of participation in Sacramental life of the Church ...

God asking us to restructure the Church in a bold and ambitious way. God wants the Church to have a dynamic structure that will allow the Church to prosper once again well into the future.

I think that God is asking us to slow down and listen to His Word. God speaks to us in so many ways, prophetically, but we are too caught up in our busy world with our pressing deadlines to

stop, pause and listen. If only we could pause and pray before we act or react, our words and decisions could be game changers for ourselves and others. I also think that God is gently bringing Christian Denominations together. We are his Church on Earth. United we stand, divided we fall and there are oh so many forces trying to erode the Body of Christ on Earth.
To embrace all our communities with love, respect and acceptance
God is calling us to live in relationship with each other with dignity and respect regardless of age, race, creed, gender, ability, social and political status or life's experiences
<p>We have 'spoken boldly' on topics at our previous gatherings; and we have become 'bold' in our topic today! We are concerned about the make-up of the representatives on the Plenary Council. We are concerned that the number of clergy compared with the number of laity, is grossly imbalanced; and the voting status of the laity is unfair and unjust. We are asking that the make-up of the Plenary Council be changed.</p> <p>We feel that God is asking us to adopt practices which are 'ecumenical' in their nature. Not only in inter-faith practices, but also in relation to the diversity of groups within the Catholic tradition. There is an inherent need to 'come together' through open communication based on respect, tolerance and willingness to help each other.</p> <p>Our Church has Social Justice inherent in its Christian ethos; we believe that our Church needs to be more effective, more vocal, more active in the practice of social justice. We see the need for Social Justice to be stronger in 4 levels: Bishops Conference; Social Justice Commission; local parishes and individuals. Encourage and educate the individuals on HOW to put Social Justice into everyday living.</p>
We need to be Spirit filled and use the gifts of the Spirit. We need to renew the Church and be compassionate, loving, non-judgemental, listening communities where we encounter Jesus as we seek to do the will of God. Evangelisation should be at the forefront of all we do. We need to grow in holiness—in Bible study, prayer and meditation.
<p>` For Australian Catholics to be more committed to a Christian lifestyle and to make living our Catholic Faith a constant part of our daily lives.</p> <p>` For all Australian Catholics to have a close personal relationship with Jesus (and the Gospels).</p> <p>` To increase our knowledge and understanding of Church teachings, and particularly in relation to Mass and the Eucharist.</p> <p>` Personal and community prayer, and in particular the Divine Mercy prayers as revealed to St Faustina.</p>
To live the good news of Christ and to share this message.
* That we are open to more options for those especially living in rural areas to fulfil their Sunday obligation. Suggest that the priest travelling around remote parishes saying Masses is able to reassure parishioners that their weekday Mass will fulfil the Sunday obligation.

* That in the Diocese of [-] Managers to attend to the Financial and Property Management, be employed to take the burden off aged, busy parish priests, to free them up for their pastoral duties.

* That [-] parishes be amalgamated to make stronger spiritual communities and not have valuable resources—people and assets spread so thinly, with each parish struggling to get volunteers, and having some with small numbers attending Mass etc.

There is so much that as Catholics we can be thankful and grateful to God for and to begin this submission I would like to acknowledge this. My gratitude is also with those who have gone before us in Australia and throughout the world who have answered the call to God at whatever cost to themselves which has made it possible for us to continue to enjoy the blessings that the Holy Catholic Church offers us. So as not to make this a wordy document I will be as succinct as possible and use dot points to further facilitate this.

- The doctrines of the Catholic Church must continue to be proclaimed. A scriptural and catechetical explanation should be offered where necessary.
- Priests must be encouraged to offer the sacraments for the faithful as their first duty to the faithful and this as often as possible.
- A process to hold bishops, and even the Pope, accountable for failing to deal with sexual abuse should be implemented.
- Homosexuality in the clergy is absolutely not acceptable in any form. If a person has a proclivity to this condition they should not be accepted into the priesthood or the religious life. It would be very unkind to allow an alcoholic to work in a bottle shop.
- Denials that there has not been any problem relating to homosexuality and the sex abuse crisis must be stopped.
- It is time for an order or a way for ordained priest to live and work in the world as do married men. Married men are expected to hold 8 to 5 jobs and still nurture their families after hours. Priests should be providing the sacraments and the operation of buildings and other ministries should be given to the laity in the parishes. Priests can of course be part of these ministries or committees that run these ministries if they wish. A method of payment for the sacraments could be organised by the parishes, but in essence, the same as for a father or husband, a sense of self-sacrifice is required in any vocation.
- A major problem with the priesthood is its lack of engagement with the wider community and working in the community would overcome this. So many of our priests today are lazy and have a sense of entitlement to the Church and its assets and this would also overcome this problem.

- Opportunities to tap into the youth e.g. Youth groups, welcoming—other religious organisations seem to tap into the youth.
- Church groups operating within schools at lunchtime.
- There needs to be a greater inclusion of non-Catholics at Masses and within schools.
- Call for a consistency of practice across the diocese.

- To remember that Christ is centre.
- Opportunities for teaching about the Mass, particularly for those who are not Catholic or who are not churched.
- Need for inclusion.
- A voice for immigrants and other topical issues.
- We need to live our faith outside the church walls.
- Catholic identity needs to be established.
- Consider social justice issues going on in our world or in our country, particularly environmental issues.
- Listen to the youth of the Church to see what they want—this is integral to the future.
- To improve connections and relationships between staff, students and community—we are all part of it together.
- To move back to more traditional gospel values.
- For our youth to be more present in the Church and for parents to be more engaged and accountable for engaging children.
- Help people to see the relevance and importance for them; to see what is in it for them (self-entitled generation).
- Make connections between generations.
- Make it a 'real' experience.
- Church needs to accommodate youth as well as older parishioners—the Church has not changed much over time.

Most meaningful about the Church. Sacraments and Community. As above. Changes. Firstly priests to have 2 options—celibacy or marriage. Our priests who have left to get married (are still priests). They could be offered to come back and minister to the people NOW. Seeing what has happened in the Church this is the best solution. The Church needs to open FULLY to Holy Spirit. Taking notice of those fully alive in the Spirit. My vision of the future Church all people coming together. Thank you once again for this opportunity.

Step 4, Pray and Respond” of the Programme, our group responds as follows:- We think God is asking us in Australia to be a Church whose spirituality is characterised by Christian compassion, tolerance and joyfulness. The future leadership and decision making of the Church will be representative of all of its members acknowledging the giftedness and diversity of all of the people of God. Thank You, [-], on behalf of the Group.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?” Our group identified that: “God is asking us to find new and better ways to connect with Australian Society.”

The Church seems perhaps to have grown tired of speaking out against abortion. Maybe she needs to take a more positive approach. Emphasize the positives; speak about the gift of life—the

sanctity of human life is paramount. Consider how many precious lives have been saved by the Church speaking out about abortion. The secular world offers many reasons why is it OK to abort a baby that is not wanted, for whatever reason. The Church needs to play an active role to counter the arguments which support abortion, but in a more positive fashion. The Church has much more to offer. After all, “the WORD was made flesh”. The sanctity of human life is affirmed by the Incarnation. Perhaps members of our Church could be encouraged to ‘contemplate’ on what we as individuals and as a community love about our Church—the positives. What are those things and practices which make us more aware of God’s presence in our midst and of God in each other? How does God speak through these and through each other?

I think it can be argued that the Church is in crisis. The old model of power from the top down and clericalism in the Church is not sustainable? The numbers of priests, brothers and nuns has dramatically decreased and is in terminal decline. The recent Royal Commission has further tarnished the reputation of the formally ordained religious vocations, and for right or wrong reasons confirm that these vocations are not the answer to the ‘saving’ the Church. The top down model and structure in the Church, where ordained clerics do most of the work and the laity are passive participants, will lead to continued decline in Church relevance in our society. Out of this adversity there is an opportunity for the Church to renew herself. It will require that the laity of the Church step up and re-enthuse the Church from the ground up. I am not sure how this will look. It will have to be driven by the Holy Spirit with the Laity taking it on as their “vocation”. It will be less reliant attendance at services of worship. Two of the critical areas where a renewed lay-led Church can be relevant is in:

- 1. – “being” the face of Christ in the world especially to the poor as Pope Francis has continually stressed (looking outwards—Action).
- 2. - personal transformation and spiritual development of individual Church members (looking inwards—Contemplation).

I think God is asking us to 'preserve the treasures' He has given us through Jesus Christ, His Son. We, as a Church, need to contemplate deeply what the essence of these treasures is. What are they? I think it is the sacrifice of the Mass—the perfect act of Adoration to our all holy, all loving God. How else can we as mere creatures, albeit adopted children of God, offer Him worthy adoration and praise? We should not 'water it down' to make it more palatable, more attractive to modern man (men, women and children). In the words of *Gaudium et Spes*, we do need to listen to "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age [too]; but the greatest longing in man (of every age) is summed up in Augustine's words 'You have made us for yourself alone and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.' (Augustine Confessions Bk 1: 1)." That really is the bottom line. Nothing else can satisfy the human heart and longing. After all Christ came to show us the way. We, as a Church, need to hear the human pain and longing, and weakness, but we need to beware of falling into the trap of watering down the sacred mysteries. We need to clarify what is essential and what is simply human practice to draw people to God. We need to implore God to give us the wisdom to know the difference. We do not want to swell the numbers coming to Mass 'at any cost'. While the Mass is a community act, it is not for social entertainment. Remember the 'principle' of the rich young man in Mark 10:- what Jesus asked was too much for the young man, but Jesus did not back down and water down His invitation. Perhaps

we need to actively 'explain' the parts of the Mass as we move into the different sections so that the faithful are given understanding. For example, as we 'perform the Penitential rite', 'listen to the Readings' and participate in the Eucharist. A short commentary (not too cumbersome or detailed) could be included. We Catholics are so blessed to have such a beautiful liturgy of the Mass, and it is possible for us to be engaged actively in the Mass and not simply passive participants. How then can we make the Mass more present to those 'present'? Greater understanding leads to greater love. Let's try to deepen this understanding. Also, we need to reach out to families, who no longer come to Mass, in ways that meet them where they are at, but not by watering down the Mass so they can 'enjoy' it more. God has to be the focus of our adoration at Mass, not our human entertainment. It really is about Him, not about us primarily. The Mass provides the opportunity for us to 'hear his voice'. But, of course, it is not the only way, but it is the way 'par excellence' when we can listen as community and respond as community. We support each other at this gathering.

- To be mindful, friendly and respectful
- To be more present in the Church
- To show kindness to each other and ourselves
- To be generous
- To be a leader for our peers and others
- To eradicate sexism and racism
- To show no discrimination to other religious groups
- To spread the word
- To be more actively involved in the community
- For the Church to have a better connection with school
- To promote the Catholic Church
- To have younger priests
- To make Masses more relevant
- To be more environmentally aware
- To give more attention to the homeless
- To support gay marriage and show less scrutiny
- To do more in terms of climate change and the world
- To pray for rain
- Involve youth more frequently in the Mass
- To bring more people back to Church
- To be strong with mercy and faith
- To learn from our mistakes

- To take care of the less fortunate
- To make wise choices
- To be truthful and humble
- Stop the wars
- Change the way we act
- To care for your family
- To get involved in the Church
- To pray more
- Make Church a more inviting and appealing place to be
- Use a variety of music in worship services, especially music youth relate to.
- To assist refugees
- To promote freedom
- To be considerate and forgive
- To follow Jesus
- To be respectful of beliefs
- To be selfless
- To help other countries
- To be good today, but better tomorrow
- To develop positive relationships
- To assist those in need of health services
- Build centres and support those who are homeless, assist with job securing and training
- Love one another for who they are
- Be faithful to God
- Appreciate what you have already
- Pray for necessities
- Have direct contact with others, put down devices and uphold the gospel values

Turn from evil and turn to Jesus. Come from darkness to light. There seems to be chaos, evil manipulation across the world. We need silence to get in touch with God, to be alone with God in prayer. There is so much inappropriate engagement and we need God to counter this. We need to teach and encourage our families, encourage them and lead them to Christ, rather than the negative approach, which seems to be the general trend. We need to be an example to all, show Christ within and stand up and be counted. We also need to be open and patient with the diversity, races, religions etc. We need to reengage with young people. The credibility of the

Church has been diminished because of the sexual abuse in the Church. The young belong to the future. We need to rekindle their trust in Christ and the Church. Need to remember that we are One Body but many parts, therefore we need to respect, understand and support the diversity within the Church. Empower people within the Church; for each, the young, the middle aged and the old express the richness of our faith in different ways. Each is valid and beautiful, and we should be showing tolerance and respect at every level and every age. It should not be a question of 'getting rid of' things/practices that one section treasures because another section sees them as irrelevant or unhelpful (e.g. the Rosary). We need to try to see from the others' point of view. If something does not appeal to one group, then it does not need to be enforced for all (except for the essentials). If it is helpful for some then respect that for them.

I think God is asking us to be more open to change. In Pope Francis' document, *Evangelii Gaudium*, he tells us that we need to be a Church that goes forth enthusiastically and that the Church needs to foster a sense of belonging. Jesus never excluded anyone. In fact, "he came to call sinners, not just the virtuous". The Catholic Church as I see it today, almost deliberately sets about excluding people. Who can measure up? Not many!! We teach 'do not judge' but spend a whole lot of time judging others.

Equity—a balance in the Church, reflective of contemporary Australian society, where women are considered equal. Clergy—lay persons? Women? Married? Engagement—how do we attract and engage young people and future generations. Transparency and Accountability—for the wrong-doings within the Church, both past and future. Faith and Identity—being clear about who we are as a Catholic Church—our unique identity

Engagement of youth in the Church community. Inclusion of all members in the Church community e.g. people with mental illness, homosexuality. Stay authentic to our traditions and history. Our old ways don't need to be forgotten and thrown out e.g., Pray the Rosary. Be open to new ideas and change. Whatever that is? E.g. Married priests and female priests. Youth need to be involved in social justice organisations. Teach youth the connection to how we treat others is connected to our faith. Equipping the laity to lead in our Church. Pluralism—respect other religions but recognising our differences. Too much focus in teaching about other religions and not enough focus on our simple Catholic faith traditions and practices. Transparency and accountability. Staff in Catholic schools need to be authentic to their faith. Attendance doesn't = faith.

God wants us to act on social justice. For example to acknowledge the lives of unborn children, to care for the earth, to have patience, acceptance and understanding in regards to sexuality (LGBT) (contraception), immigration. God wants us to address the ecumenism, accountability, women in the clergy, marriage of priests. We need to consider the changing roles of leaders in the Church. Church needs to be more welcoming and enjoyable for all people. The youth need to be catered for in a more engaging way.

Consider the future and direction of leadership—engagement of the youth and families. Respect and tolerance of all.

I believe God is asking us to retain the truths handed down to us from Jesus Christ to the Apostles and the Church Fathers. These truths are unchangeable and if we want our Catholic Church to

survive the ongoing onslaught against it we must teach our children these truths. We must return to the "Chief Truths" of the Catholic Church and to be sure and firm that these truths are inviolable. My observation is that young people are seeking certainty and truth and flock to the churches where they hear firm and clear truths and where the priests are traditional in the teaching of the Catholic Church as passed down through the "Seat of Peter". The teaching of the "watered down and permissive" version of the Catholic Faith has been a disaster and we are in the midst of a crisis throughout the world. Relativism and a modern form of communism as laid waste to our younger generations. They long for the real truths of our wonderful Catholic heritage in all its splendour and beauty. Jesus Our Lord suffered and died a cruel death on the cross so that we might enter into his love for us. I have lately observed 240 young people sharing 10 days with the Immaculata Nuns praying and worshipping with many hours of adoration too. The faith of two of my teenage granddaughters was profoundly deepened by this retreat. My husband and I have 32 grandchildren and we are very concerned that they receive the true teaching of the Catholic faith. We and the parents are doing as much as we can to ensure this and we long for the many other families to also receive this truth. Yours faithfully [-]

The institutional Church is being asked to be humble. Humble in a very obvious and sincere way. To lose some of the trappings of 'mighty/glorious' old Church and to become generous and to live a real humility. This should necessarily extend to questioning and changing some traditions such as the method for appointing bishops and priests to parishes. The first act of humility will be to accept that previous appointment decisions have on occasion been flawed. So the challenge is to change it. Perhaps parishioners could be invited to contribute.

Rediscovery of our faith. Listen to the needs of young people. Treat everyone with respect and dignity, especially gays, divorced, women. Remember the gospel message—rediscover our mission. Open our eyes, hearts, ears and have compassion. Live the Kingdom rather than following laws. Have loyalty to the teachings of the Church. Keep the faith. Be resilient. To have faith in the bigger plan. To encourage everyone to live in peace. Question of married clergy/women priests.

Acceptance of all peoples whatever their differences. Open to different cultures. How do we attract more males, children and young families? Encourage more ecumenical endeavours and activities.

Justice, mercy and honesty faith in action. Building stronger communities—individuals become more isolated. Increasing pressure on youth due to social media, Sharing what we have globally with regard to food. How will we present a joy-filled living of Christianity that will invite and inspire others to follow? Is a celibate priesthood more important than a living Eucharistic community? Women priests? After the disgraces of and in our Church, how can we become and present as more confidently Catholic? Who are the poor amongst us in Australia today and how do we reach out to them? What meaningful roles will we give our youth today and how do we reach out to them? How do we build communities of care? More equitable distributions of wealth. Walking the talk. Be strong in community. Demonstrate humility Energetic. Show by example-be disciples Meet people where they are, be open, be welcoming. Listen to people's stories—work together ecumenically. To treat others with dignity. To gather in prayer and worship. To spread the Gospel story. To gain knowledge and love of God. To welcome the stranger Aging clergy. No more cover-ups. Education. Justice, (system) mercy (immigration) and honesty (a

day's work for a day's pay). Live the true message of Jesus. Share the true message of Jesus. Inclusive Church. Take responsibility. Who do we think we are and where do we think we are going?

"If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, forgiven their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14) Australia (and the Church in Australia) has deviated from God's Word and hence we need to turn and come back to Him knowing He will forgive and heal our land. Prophecies over Australia from de Quinoas: "The Great Southland of the Holy Spirit". Australia has a God ordained and appointed destiny to be the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit. Jesus died and rose and sent the Promised Holy Spirit—we need to be endowed with this power from on High. (Seek the Power of the Holy Spirit) for the journey and the job. We need to be strengthened in our faith in the truth and Power of the Lord Jesus Christ to declare and see and bring to bear the prophecies. Recognize and demonstrate the Oneness of the Body of Christ "I pray that they may be one as we are one." (Jn 17) Look at such issues as abortion, women joining the priesthood and once faithful women being so disgusted by the activities of some priests, bishops and cardinals in the misuse of the power and the betrayal of trust by having sex with parishioners and hiding it that they have fled the Church and feel so bad. We will have a job to reconnect with them. Not only must the cancer be rooted out but regular parishioners, who have done the right thing, must have some salve for their wounds. So many people have suffered disillusionment, bitterness and betrayal and have voted with their feet. They have left the Church. Those of us who have stayed, retain a thirst for justice which remains unquenched! We that remain loyal to God's command to "keep holy the Sabbath", do our best to entice those who have fallen away to return to Mass. Many of these will never do so as they find the whole affair boring, irrelevant and totally out of touch with today's issues.

Australia has a God-ordained purpose and destiny encapsulated in the words "Great Southern Land of the Holy Spirit" But in order to fulfil that we have to turn back to God—each one personally. Recent legislation has gotten us 'right off the path'. We who know the truth and the Lord need to be humbly bold and let our light shine and not be ashamed of the Gospel, nor of Christ even though we might be ashamed of ourselves and others who come in the name of the Lord. Remember the words of Hosea, which are found in the hymn 'come back to me with all your heart, don't let fear keep us apart.' Need to hear the young who are not keen on the 'traditional' things. They seem to be 'anti-traditional' but prefer to focus on charitable works. The idea of home Masses rather than Masses, which have vestments which the young do not seem to support. In terms of the Mass, perhaps we need to be open-minded in the debate about the Church's position on women and the priesthood. Women are the 'receivers', the keepers of the flame, and men are the ones who are charged with 'looking after', the giving. A point that Peter was married. Some of the rules are man-made, so we can perhaps question the value of many of these rules/regulations in today's society. There seems to be a certain amount of inflexibility in relation to a number of these rules. We need some 'interfaith' dialogue, and ecumenical endeavours. We need to encourage the positive and not get bogged down in the negative. The biggest tension seems to be between the strongly traditional and strongly progressive. A question in relation to 'annulments' within the Church. Does this need to be revisited? We need unity in

diversity. Worship and work together, respecting, appreciating, supporting and affirming the great diversity within the Church. The diversity which is an expression of the reality of our God, the never-changing God. Perhaps He is asking us to open our hearts to understand the other, very different expression of our Church life. Each is valid and beautiful and an expression of the creativity of our God.

We discussed 'clericalism'—what is clericalism? The 'power' of ordained priests, bishops; the male hierarchical structure of 'the Church'; the perceptions of the Catholic Church as and through these clerics. Many aspects were raised...and the question is: Will 'clericalism' continue to BE, in the Church in Oz, or will there be a brave dismantling of that 'power of the ordained'?

To follow the ten commandments. To abolish abortion. To protect our children from pornography, screen addiction and drug addiction. To love God and to love one another. To show compassion, to be forgiving, to live life as Jesus did. To be more caring to our fellow man. To teach the next generation about God and to reinvent the Catholic Church so that people can worship in a place that caters for young and old with music that is uplifting and enjoyable and where people have a sense of community. Where the youth can come together to develop faith in God in an informal setting where silly traditions do not nullify the word of God. Making Church dull and forcing people to switch off and turn away. God wants our priests to be allowed to marry and for women to enter the clergy.

How do we make the Church relevant in an age of capitalism, poor communication, lack of respect and taking responsibility for decisions?

I believe God is asking us to heed His (God's) Word (Jesus) and get back to the fundamentals of Christianity, as at Jesus' time (to reconnect with our Jewish vine), and be the light we are meant to be—zealous for Him: "I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to vomit you out of My mouth!"

I would not be so presumptuous as to try to answer this question. It is a completely subjective answer that is required without any observable experiential basis. As such, any answer is invalid.

To be the same as the early Church people: before the Greco-Roman and other pagan influences occurred. There are some timely books on this issue such as Pagan Christianity, Reimagining Church, Insurgence, Finding Organic Church, and the Untold Story of the New Testament Church.

The Catholic education system has failed to teach the fundamentals of what it means to be a follower of Christ. When I talk to my friends who attended Catholic schools they were not taught any of the foundational structures that make up the Church. For example, I was in a discussion about confession with one of these friends. He had no idea how it happened, most importantly why. This is fundamental teaching for saving souls. For the only way out of mortal sin is through absolution which comes from confession. Yet the Catholic education system has failed to teach these vital lessons and must be to blame for not saving the souls of children that attend their schools. In Mathew 28; 19-20, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you." The Catholic Church has failed to evangelize and teach the youth of this

nation, and I believe that a much greater emphasis must be placed within schools to teach the fundamentals of Catholicism, and not just continue down the path that has failed for the past fifty years.

To reach out to others. To encourage young people to stay in the Church. We only need to look to other religions like 7 Day Adventists to get ideas on how to do this. To be more inclusive of people in our own community and those in other church communities. To value the input and ideas of young people. To not be so traditional e.g. reintroduce the 3rd rite of reconciliation. To find a solution / alternative to the way our daily / weekly Masses are conducted or to the way we receive Communion. To find a way to address the shortage of priests like:

- inviting men back in who have been priests and left the Church to be married
- allowing married men to be priests
- offering more liturgy style services particularly in rural areas that could be conducted by lay people or deacons
- allowing women to be deacons.

I'm sure the majority of the congregation would feel more comfortable with these sorts of arrangements rather than have to listen to a priest who has English as a second language.

To ensure that the Church in Australia becomes a fully welcoming and inclusive Church.

We believe that God wants us to build a Church for Australia that will help us navigate the 21st century. This Church must be built on respectful relationships—with God, with people and with Creation. A relationship with God calls us to shine the light of Christ on the world—through our words and actions. It is beholden on all in the Church to live their faith, but it is also beholden on the Church to be seen to be a beacon of Christ's love and compassion. We have been let down and disappointed again and again by the Australian Catholic Church's silence on issues of injustice to some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people in our society. This includes issues within our own Church. As Catholics, we want to embrace our faith and our Church, not be tainted by our association with it. A relationship with God also calls us to walk with other faiths, building bridges and connecting people. It calls us to faith education and Bible study, not as an end in itself, but to understand our ancient wisdom and our own faith, so that we can live it in our lives. A relationship with people calls us to listen to those who have no voice. Our Church must hear the cry of the poor, and speak up for them if needed. The Church must be prepared to act—to put its ample resources towards pastoral care and social justice, and put its ample influence towards changing the laws and conditions, which bring about hardship and poverty. Again, the Church must be a beacon of Christ's love and compassion. A relationship with people calls us to be open, to be honest, and to listen to people from all generations, cultures and backgrounds. Our Church leaders need to be among the people, listening to them and learning from them. From this, we can build vibrant Church communities that can provide both sanctuary and celebration. We can enliven our liturgy, and create a distinctly Australian liturgy. We can truly acknowledge women in our Church and their leadership. We can fully utilise our laity, and relieve the ever-increasing pressure on our rapidly depleting clergy. We can expand religious vocations and improve their appeal to modern Australians. We can acknowledge and learn from our Indigenous peoples. We

can be inclusive, and become a truly Catholic Church. A relationship with Creation calls us to hear the cry of the Earth—to take an active interest in our environment and the practices that threaten it. The Church must be visible in calling us all as individuals, but also our governments and society as a whole, to care for our natural resources, and ensure that our future generations will be able to enjoy them and prosper with them. The Church in Australia is in crisis. This is not a passing phase. Without real change, the Church will wither and die. Australia is a unique part of God's creation. The Church in Australia can also be unique in many ways. To build a distinctive Australian Church will take courage, integrity and leadership. God is asking for nothing less.

* The Church to be decisive and swift acting, show leadership and transparency in dealing with all forms of abuse within the system in order to regain trust and relevance.

* To be more flexible.

* Allow married clergy and women clergy.

* Allow clergy to perform marriages "outside the Church".

* Consider suitability with regard to priest placement—understand regional requirements.

* To listen and relate to parishioners.

I think God may be asking us to consider how the Church can remain an important part of people's lives in this current environment of materialism and self-centred attitudes. How can we continue to have reason to turn to God for the times when we are in need and when we can just celebrate our lives with him?

To have strength in times when the world as a whole is questioning our faith.

To consider the practices used in Catholic schools to instil/promote growth of our Catholic faith. When we note the lack of young adults/families in our Churches maybe something needs to change. Our faith needs to be relevant to the society we live in ... I feel the Church is so out of touch with grassroots values. The institution is hanging on to its power, which is patriarchal. Democracy is part of normal life, but in the Church individuals have no rights and therefore no dignity; viz the handling of the child abuse scandals. Where is the accountability for individual actions and where is the transparency of the steps taken?

I feel he is asking us to look at the fact that we have a lot of priests that have left the priesthood to get married. It seems a shame to waste their knowledge and now their experience as married people. It may save our priests interfering with our children. They are more likely to know what they are talking about when it comes to marriage and help the divorce rate to come down. I have a brother-in-law that is an ex-priest and could not ask for a more understanding man with lots of passion, sincerity, knowledge of how to handle people in trouble, patience to deal with people. There has been a lot of pressure on priests over the years and I am from an era that we only had Mass once a month where the priest and two nuns came to our town and we had Mass and Sunday school. I had to go away to [-] for my first communion and then to [-] for my confirmation. I do not think bringing priests that are missionaries for our parishes as they do not understand our culture and some do not want to change. We have a priest who keeps to himself and does not seem keen to learn how to run a parish and he has no idea how to change bulbs, gas

cylinders etc. and not interested in learning. It makes it hard to keep our parishioners keep coming to Church when they cannot understand him and he does not take any notice of what the congregation is asking of him. It is turning people away, which is a shame as he is supposed to be taking our Lord's place. Some people are finding it hard but keep coming because of our love for Christ and his Church.

In the light of the recent events with Cardinal Pell, perhaps the Lord is requiring a humble contrition throughout the Body of Christ in Australia. We need to develop an open listening heart and a servant attitude. How? Perhaps by 'humbling ourselves and pray, depart from our wicked ways' and He will forgive us and heal our land. We need to recognise and respect the Body of Christ and work together as one. Need to pursue, declare and hold to the prophetic Word of the Great Southern Land of the Holy Spirit. To study and pray the Word of God (Gospels and Letters) to get a clear, bold understanding by the Holy Spirit, of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring unity in the Body of Christ and shed light in a dark world. Need to heed the words of Mk 7:11, not to void God's words by human tradition. Perhaps we need to show more compassion for Cardinal Pell. His appeal is pending so he is still 'innocent until proved guilty beyond reasonable doubt'. While this has shaken the Church in Australia, we need to be more compassionate and humble—'But for the grace of God, there go I'. All may seem hopeless. This has brought disrepute on the Church, but it is important to remember that these kinds of abuses have occurred in many other churches, many secular organisations, e.g. Scouts, in so many homes not linked with churches and in society in general. It is worldwide and not just an Australia. After all child pornography is part of worldwide organised crime. The Church does not have the monopoly on these kinds of abuses. We can become discouraged and depressed with the media hype and the shame, but we need to be optimistic—Christ has 'overcome the world'. We need to be united as Christians, irrespective of church affiliation or our dogmas. Concentrate on what unites us and try to make a difference in these troubled times, speak out humbly, boldly and with simplicity and pray with our hearts, not empty words. It should not be a 'them and us' mentality. I believe that the Holy Spirit is asking us to believe in Him and His power to bring the Church through all this. He is leading this dialogue and as with Vatican II he will lead the Church to renewal and growth through these troubled times. He is listening to the hopes, desires and fears of the people of God. We need to profess our faith in Him and His working within the Church. We need to believe that He is at the helm, even though we cannot see it, and we need to affirm our belief that he will guide us through the storms buffeting the Church. After all, Christ did say that He would be with us to the end of the world, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church.

I believe we are being asked to return to His Son. To listen to His word and live it best as we can with no compromise or grey areas or "modernisation" of the Church. People in this country need to be reminded of the fact that they are going to die and be judged on how they lived their lives not on how famous or successful they are. God wants us to come to our true heavenly home and to do this through His Son.

God's gift and mission to us remains the same. His message to love one another is constant. In his own time on Earth he was a catalyst for change. Our Church is in urgent need of reform involving the people's full participation rather than the decisions of a small group lacking in representation of the community they represent. The challenge facing the Church is to involve its people in

carving out specific responses and actions to address abuse within the Church and other pressing contemporary issues facing its faithful.

We need pastoral presence living in the parishes, giving guidance in faith/charity, leading parishioners to additional participation.

- Homosexual activities and marriage is not to be tolerated or supported by Church leaders
- Due to recent legislation changes regarding abortion, the Church needs to make every Catholic aware that it is a mortal sin and an excommunicable offense under Canon Law.
- The traditions and customs of the Western Church should be preserved with great zeal
- The Traditional Latin Mass (or the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite under Pope Benedict XVI's *motu proprio (Summorum Pontificum)* is to be more readily available. There should be at least one TLM in every diocese; if not every deanery.
- Clerical celibacy is not to be scorned or changed
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be more easily available. There should be the opportunity to go to confession before every single Mass in every parish across Australia.
- Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is to be employed at every parish across Australia on a weekly basis.
- The liturgy should be clear to all attending that it is the representation of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary and that the Eucharist truly is Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Therefore; impious practices in the liturgy that started as unauthorized abuses in the 1960s such as: receiving communion in the hand whilst standing and lay ministers of communion should be dispensed with and only allowed under unique individual cases (such as a person with knee injuries and cannot kneel; or a person who has tongue cancer and cannot receive the host directly in the mouth)
- A more clear teaching of the dogma of *Extra ecclesia nulla salus* and that the Catholic Church is the One, True, Church founded by Jesus is to be stressed. Therefore, Catholics should only attend Protestant and other heretical and/or schismatic Christian groups on special occasions such as a: Baptism, Wedding or Funeral.
- Seminarians must be formed in a traditional and orthodox manner. They should be able to have a basic understanding of the Latin and Greek languages, Canon Law, the Catechism and the Sacred Scriptures
- Clerics responsible for sexual abuse of minors and seminarians must be held accountable for their sins. The same applies to any bishop (or even the Pope) who have allegedly covered up for such abuses. Any cleric found guilty of having molested anybody or covered up for another cleric's actions should be laicized and cut off from Church funding
- The Church in Australia must be a haven for all Catholics. It should vehemently speak out against the errors of modern society such as: the LGTB agenda, abortion, cohabitation and secularism
- Priests should not distribute Holy Communion to anybody he knows is not in a state of grace (e.g. a non-Catholic, a practicing homosexual and divorced and remarried couples)

As always, Jesus and his mother Mary are telling all people to PRAY. Prayer, the Rosary and devotion to Divine Mercy should be encouraged at the Church and in the schools.

To proclaim the Word of God to all humanity in Australia. To love each other as a Church community and set aside differences because we are His Body. We have to function together as a community to have a healthy community. Our Father in heaven wants us to be united by following his words.

1) The laity must take ownership of their local parish church by supporting their local priest and bishop financially. Accountability lines must be clear and regularly monitored. 2) There should be a formal process of commissioning some laypersons by the local priest and bishop to enable them to be involved in liturgical services such as visiting the sick, burying the dead, etc. This will enrich the ministry of the ordained ministry. 3) Serious consideration must be given to the ministry of the permanent diaconate. This ministry should and will enrich the Church. Women such as Priscilla also served as deaconesses in the early Church. It is therefore worthwhile considering women for this ministry. I understand that the conversation on the ordination of women to the permanent diaconate will involve the whole universal Church, and not just the Church in Australia. Be that as it may, it is a necessary conversation and we should ask the Holy Spirit to guide us. 4) We must have systems in place to make sure that we do not find ourselves as a Church having to deal with issues of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. 5) Celibacy is a gift which some people receive from God. And not all celibate people need to be priests. Similarly, marriage is also a gift which is not received by all people. I think it would be a good idea to emulate the Eastern Catholic Church when it comes to the discipline of celibacy. In the Eastern Catholic Church, the Coptic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church, a priest can either be celibate or married. It is worthwhile considering this model in the Western Catholic Church. Once again the laity must understand that they will have to be the ones who support married priests and their families. 6) The Church must continue to serve humanity through good works such as feeding the hungry, providing shelter to the homeless, reaching out to vulnerable people in other parts of the world, taking care of the sick, etc., directly or through organisations such as Caritas, SVDP society, Catholic Mission, etc. The Church's presence must be felt in the communities. 7) The Catholics must be taught the faith from very early on. The sacramental programme must be meaningful, so that children have a solid understanding of the faith. There must be ongoing catechesis. The faithful must understand such basic things as the liturgy of the Church, scripture, the Church calendar, the sacraments, etc. Each Catholic must at least own a missal and a Bible, and study these. We must provide opportunities for ongoing formation at parish and diocesan levels. If necessary easy to use resources must be developed for lay people to provide ongoing catechesis. 8) We must as a Church take music seriously. The faithful must learn to sing and be guided by professionals. We need pianists. Priests must try to sing some parts of the Mass.

a. Support and encouragement of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) from all levels of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Following Pope Francis comment—CCR as a blessing for the Catholic Church and that Baptism of the Holy Spirit is for the whole Church. b. Support the use of Charisms/Spiritual Gifts (CCR) (1 Cor 12 1-11) for the building up of the body of Christ. c. The Church to be the guiding light for society to come back to God and reinstate God's moral law. d.

Support to families especially those falling apart. e. Address the confusion that is occurring as a result of false teaching.

That the bishop selection process be more transparent and inclusive of local clergy and laity, and not such a secretive process that neglects to consider the prayerful wisdom of God's people and clergy. Matters some parishioners are concerned about : decrease in Mass attendance; young people not embracing and living the faith and with a poor knowledge of the teachings of the Church which are largely ignored and irrelevant to their lives; quality of formation in our Catholic schools is poor; it is a challenge to openly and publically profess our faith and beliefs, e.g. moral issues like abortion and euthanasia; dramatic decrease in marriages in the Church; Sacrament of Penance rejected /neglected by majority of Catholics.

I believe that God is asking each and every bishop and archbishop to be much more vocal, both frequently at the Sunday Mass homilies and also in their publicised quotes and writings, in condemning and protesting the immorality of many practices that affect all Australian citizens. Some of most drastic of these practices right now are abortion, the lack of respect or understanding in so many of our citizens of the right to life for all people, the immorality of pending and existing euthanasia legislation, and last but not least, the drastic and graphic sex education programs in both Catholic and state schools—especially the Safe Schools programs. Each and every bishop needs to be fully educated on and aware of these practices. As senior clergy of the Catholic Church, they need to be outspoken and unafraid in condemning these practices. The bishops also need to visibly and vocally strongly support pro-life pregnancy help centres within their dioceses and to support the role of parents in choosing Gospel- and Catholic teaching-centred school curriculums for their children. Finally, we need all of our bishops to reinforce, again both from the pulpit and in their written and spoken words, the paramount importance of only voting for political candidates who uphold the dignity of life from conception to natural death. If our own bishops, leaders of the faithful whom they are, are afraid to uphold basic truths from the Catholic Church and the gospel, then Australian citizens, especially our younger generations, will fail to see that the Church has any relevance to society and continue their exit from the Church. We need strong bishops.

We need to ask why the Church is losing young people in droves. Young people should gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Evolution. The Church needs to ...

- bring its rules into the 21st Century, particularly regarding the way it treats divorcees and marriages that take place outside the Church, as well as others that are cast out along the way.
- needs to look to the appeal of evangelicals who seem to do things well by reaching out to young families.
- needs to address the culture of life today, the laziness that prevails among Catholics who feel they “don’t get anything out of it and therefore make little effort to be a part of it”.
- needs to make the liturgy open and appealing to people of all ages. The Mass must be made appealing for all people and involve all people.
- needs to work ecumenically, sharing resources and infrastructure and liturgical practice.

There should be...

- time for shared reflections at the Homily time such as already happens in small rural communities.
- be a greater emphasis on the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and the Religious life, on faith development and opportunities to be called to a deeper living of our spirituality.
- Revisitation of the Movements of some years ago that worked well at that time such as Cursillo and the Antioch Youth Movement.
- A review of guidelines for the Sacramental program among youth and a review of the appropriate age for the celebration of the Sacraments particularly Confirmation. The Sacramental journey of young people is not supported in any continuing way by parents.
- A review of the role of Laity in the Church—they need to be recognised and acknowledged in a formal sense in order that they be trained to teach the faith effectively when called upon to do so.
- Opportunity for receiving effective feedback. There needs to be a formal feedback loop and/or tools whereby the laity can voice their opinions and be heard. Lay people need to be commissioned by the community to celebrate Baptisms and Funerals.

The Church also needs ...

- to welcome married priests into its ranks.
- to establish a renewed sense of holiness, taking the example of Jesus and have priorities of being inclusive, democratic, and being open to knowing more in an age of information.
- to be more ecumenical in nature, and more welcoming, where young people can have their say and be heard.
- to discuss the ordination of married men and women and welcome back priests who have left to be married. The Church should also acknowledge Anglican, Lutheran and Uniting Church orders. The meeting concluded by saying the situation surrounding George Pell had damaged the Church and rocked the faith of true believers. The final remarks were from someone who had life experience across a broad range of faith traditions and encouraged us all to work towards expressing Christian Unity, one Church across all denominations, and this was endorsed by acclamation.

We need to give consideration to marriage annulments.

- Maybe God is asking us not to get too attached to religion and only to get the good advice through, as people are now forgetting what the good things are;
- To help the less fortunate;
- He is asking us to have faith in the Church and those around us. God is also asking us to help others that are in need at this time;

- God wants us as Australians to accept all religious diversities and beliefs from all people;
- I feel like God, as he always has, has demanded praising;
- I believe that God is asking for us to be humble and kind to all people, great and small, black and white, absolutely everyone. God wants this so that we can all share his world with everyone and so that we can all live in peace;
- To treat others how we would like to be treated;
- To help one another during the hard times;
- I think God is asking us to love. To love everyone equally. With Catholic beliefs we are limited as to what opinions we can have about certain topics. I think God would want us to be accepting people for who they are. I also think God is asking us to teach people more about faith and not be afraid to voice our opinions, as well as listening to others;
- I believe he is asking us to accept all people, no matter their gender, race or sexuality as God wills things to happen for a reason and in Australia things are legally being allowed;
- To be united, help each other as we go through natural disasters. Appreciate what we have because we are quite fortunate compared to many countries;
- Consider Gay Marriage;
- Forgiveness, trust, honour;
- I think that God is asking us to respect each other and our environment. God is also asking us to help each other;
- Asking us to carry his work and legacy, asking us to spread his religion to every part of Australia, asking us to obey his teaching to reach heaven;
- I think God is asking for us to be more considerate to other people and trust him;
- I think God is asking of us to be strong through times of doubt and to keep moving forward;
- For us to be accepting of refugees;
- To consider climate change. Australia has been greatly affected by the consequences of climate change. We are supposed to be stewards of this earth and looking after it. Yet we continue to release billions of CO2 into the atmosphere. God is punishing us like he had done in the Bible before. He wants us to realise that what we are doing to his earth is wrong;
- I think God is asking for us to be accepting of all people and reconsider our view on controversial issues such as gay marriage, euthanasia, abortion and the acceptance of all faiths and ethnic groups.

To go back to Catholic basics. To be the light and truth of the world first by celebrating Mass humbly, reverently and respectfully in prayer, faithfulness, courage, joy and hope for all those whom do not know Christ Our King and the Catholic Church his mystical body here on earth for us sinners, other sinners and the faithful departed. Many of Australia's Catholic parishes no longer seem to believe in the true presence of Christ Flesh and Blood in the Eucharist. If this is not understood by those in the Church how do we think we can help anyone else, know any truth or

do any good in the eyes of God not this world which is fallen. If priests celebrate facing the altar (East) with the Tabernacle centre on the Altar, we take Communion on the tongue and at the Communion Rail (which many Churches still have) people will be drawn to God more deeply and are more likely to understand the true miracle and blessing that they are receiving and their souls will benefit more. How can it be a problem for us to humble ourselves before God like this? Priests and bishops should be retrained for this. To bear witness to God and uphold all the truths of our Faith handed down from our Lord Jesus and through the Holy Spirit and all the Holy Saints of the past and those here among us now leading us closer to Jesus and separating us from the worlds distractions and lies. For the Church to teach its own faithful the beauty, splendour, miracles and history of the Mass and our Faith so that we may be roused with the Fire of God's Love and seek Light and Truth. Many, including myself, until recently have not understood the order or history of the Mass, the miracle of consecration by the priests acting on behalf of Jesus, our Eternal priest, that the Communion celebration is a thanksgiving participated here on earth only in the Catholic Eucharistic Mass with all of heaven, the angels and saints, The Holy Spirit and God our Father present as we offer His only Son Our Lord Jesus to our Heavenly Father for the forgiveness of our sins here on Earth, for the faithful souls departed, for the Holy Church and our own intentions. For bishops to be fearless shepherds (not absent cowards) protecting their flock from the disastrous attacks from the devil upon the Church, themselves, the unborn, elderly, family, marriage, youth, schools, those consecrated, the poor, the confused, chastity. For parish councils to be prayerful and supporting. Supporting the priest in attracting souls to the Church's hard truths, reverence and light as opposed to making parishes fold to popular fashion. Youth living in mortal sin for many years do not seek approval of their sin or acceptance in their sin they want to see the Joy and Light of Christ radiating through the faithful as beacons to lead them out of their own sinful lives of false happiness and miss direction. They need to know of God's Mercy and Love and that we obtain and know this through self-sacrifices, repentance and trust in God.

To follow His commandments. To be effective witnesses for Him.

God is asking us to "listen" to what the people of the Church are saying. The Church is not only the hierarchical religious but the lay people, including women. Let us leave a legacy for our next generation, that they will cherish and be grateful for the pathway we have shown them.

I think God is asking us to follow the example set by Jesus and to adopt a spirit of inclusiveness. Jesus "... offered his invitation to all without requirements or prohibitions". To me, this means meeting and accepting people where they are in their lives and to stop placing conditions on people's involvement with the Church. Case in point: A couple of years ago, I attended the Diocesan parish Pastoral Care formation day. Even though I enjoyed the keynote speaker's presentation, I was horrified when he suggested that if parents weren't prepared to participate in the Church, their children shouldn't be baptised. His message seemed to be if you're not going to play by the rules, we don't want you on our team. Clearly, if a parent presents their child for Baptism, it shows that they still believe that Baptism means something and that they are still connected to their faith—even if it is only by a thread. I believe these are the connections to the Church that we should be nurturing, not cutting off.

Love God and love others is putting it simply. Show God's love to those we meet by the way we treat them, by what we say to and about them, by how we respect those who are poor and

marginalised, by taking the opportunities that are presented to speak of God's love, by providing appropriate learning opportunities (for listening to and reading scripture and other Christian literature and educated people) and by worshipping with our Roman Catholic community and with other Christian communities as appropriate. Many in our community still think that it's a case of go to Mass and confession and you'll avoid hell. How sad for them. We have to create welcoming communities which are joy filled and accepting before we can expect people to 'come to Mass' which seems to be the benchmark for 'success'.

Involve youth more e.g. music selection, set Mass format. Clergy and religious need to have a choice in whether to marry or not. God is asking us to not be so soft—make living more simple to be more prayerful, grateful, read the gospel and act on them and in everyday life show that GOD exists. Become more aware of environmental and people (refugees) and take action and control. To love one another and our environment. To see God in all people and find each day time to pray, talk to God and meditate. We need to listen to the Spirit and discern. Spend time discerning the mission of the Church. God is asking us to put him back in our lives and hope people will rediscover the Gospel. Let go of the notion that the Institutional Church can or will be reformed any time soon. The Church in Aust (sic) and in each part of us has to do a lot of letting go or we will not hear the Holy Spirit and struggle to be the Body of Christ for a long time. We will simply be left behind. Let go of ego, exclusiveness, arrogance, patriarchy, clericalism and our delusions. So trusting our God of LOVE, ultimate Truth and the Heart of Creation with my life and the Universe. To maintain our close links to God through the sacraments. To embrace science and technology with Christian values. To be conscious of the inequalities in our society and to acknowledge and assist the Indigenous and refugees in their struggles. To pray that world nations respect each other's borders, and maintain meaningful dialog to avoid serious conflict. To pray for others in their time of great need.

Discover our own identity share our resources. Acknowledge First Peoples and Reconciliation with them. Connecting with others in the community and support within. Become true witnesses of Christian community for others. Model the gospel for the disadvantaged. Discern some vestiges of faith e.g. Baptism. Discern the material culture and its challenges and disadvantages. Search out the troubled, dissatisfied and disillusionment of youth. Their inner struggle as some seek answers elsewhere and the pluralist. Provide spaces and places for the disconnected. Develop an online profile and provide avenues for encounters e.g. cyber communities, blogs. Re-evaluate contraception, divorce and remarriage by reconciling with the hurt who left the Church. Sacraments are the opportunity for evangelization with parents. Provide stillness in the madness—a space for prayer. Confession may need to be a reflection on personal life and an examination of life. Ordained Ministry open up leadership qualities, servant leaders and governance, who and how?

Move into action. Identity—are we becoming Christian or do we embrace our identity as Catholics. Parish needs to have input into who their bishops are going to be and leadership within their dioceses. Bishops need time frames. Priests need to be educated in financial practicalities of running parishes as well as discernment days for priests to rediscover the meaning of the Gospels. Priests need to stay focused on the poor and marginalised. More time needs to be devoted to the sick, the poor, the lonely and the youth. Less time sitting in offices or presbyteries and more time

with the people. Seminarians require more pastoral and missionary work. Youth—we need to foster the faith of our youth and pass on this faith through families. Prayer—we as a people need to spend more time in prayer and self-reflect our own relationship with God. Catholics are becoming disillusioned and losing interest. Governance—re-evaluation of how decisions are being made in the Church and how to work with others. Structure changes are required in the Church. Election of leadership within the Church needs to change. We are facing a vocational crisis. We have both structural and personal challenges within the Church. The Eucharist is the magnetic force that brings us together.

Help each other e.g. drought relief for farmers. Make the world a better place. Help neighbouring countries in need. Respect everyone's race. Give more hope to those people in need and offer a helping hand. Manage more donations and fundraisers for the poor. Be there for one another. Give more than we take. Do good for others without expecting anything in return. Share the love, be caring and respectful people. Give back to the poor. More prayer and pray for those who have lost someone. Be respectful of God. Solve climate change. Men and women are equal in the eyes of God so we should have equal rights and pay. Care for the earth and its animals. Follow the common good. Promote human dignity and reject human slavery and trafficking. Get out of our comfort zones to help others in need. More research and prayer for developing cures for diseases. Less abuse of the environment. Increase opportunities for young people in Church. Increase awareness surrounding activities for youth. Broaden people's perspectives on various issues. Promote the positive aspects of the Catholic Church. Increase the mental health awareness. Include everyone. Equality regardless of age, gender or race. Support charities so they can help others. Volunteer our time and give back to the community.

Several themes arose from our dialogue. Governance, Culture, Social Justice, Christian Life—amongst ourselves, Market place—voice in the broader culture, Presence in isolated areas, Discipleship, Youth and "Others" connections and Voice. We need to respond to the voice of the youth and discover ways to connect with them and listening to their views of life. WE need to research challenges within our youth environment. Be "Christlike" to others and reflect more on our own actions. We need to serve others more. Engage more people to become mission disciples. Be reminded continually that at Baptism we are called to serve others. Become more aware of others—accepting, tolerating and compassionate. "Harden Up"—The world does not revolve around myself but everyone within it. Become more grateful. Australia is becoming "lazy" with faith and beliefs. We need to hold the dignity of the human person high, become more aware of the vulnerable, refugees and poor. We need to become more aware of social justice issues. Hold effective dialogue. "Listen" to each other. The Church has lost its voice in the Public/Secular Australia. Build a sense of Hope. Lost human (face-to-face) connection within our own Church and diocese. We need to LIVE the Gospels. Australia has lost its moral authority. We need to consider the future needs of the people. Prepare the laity for the future. Now is the time to change our current clerical system. Format of Mass on Sunday—re-evaluate the language from the missal and use of music and power points etc. Take time to reflect on our own lives. Change the language of our rituals to convey meaning. Be more bold and courageous in proclaiming the Gospel. Empower ourselves and each other.

Go out to all the world and tell the good news.

Australia has become a very secular and almost Godless society. People have become focused on material things and have become selfish. There is no respect for life at either end of the spectrum. Many Australians don't want anyone from other countries coming here for a better way of life. We have great health and education facilities to share. Australia has the infrastructure to support more people. The mighty dollar has become the GOD of many people. Our politicians lack leadership and even though many of them are Christian, their decisions are not made in the light of the scriptures. I could go on and on but getting to the point what is God asking of us in Australia at this time we have to go back to the basics. I believe God is asking us to put aside our differences and work together to build up a country where everyone is treated equally. Church leaders, politicians and business leaders need to meet and work on the hard issues of society in the light of the Scriptures. God is asking us to be inclusive of everyone in society not to single out the wealthy and educated. He is asking us to welcome the poor and the needy and support them when we can. God is asking us to embrace the cultures of the millions of people who come here from other countries as well as embracing the culture of our own Indigenous First Australians. He is asking us to move out of our comfort zone and reach out to those who need our help. The Catholic Church and other churches and institutions have had so much bad publicity over the past 5 or more years it is time to spread some good news through the media. Through prayer and action, we can change the image of Australia portrayed by the media and embrace the issues of justice and mercy for all.

Greater openness and welcome, to counter increasing disconnection.

First of all, I think we need to affirm our belief that the Holy Spirit is guiding our Church and will lead it to growth into the future. He guided it at Vatican II, and He will do so now, and the outcome will be beyond our wildest dreams. Having said that, may I suggest that perhaps we need to provide more opportunities for women, youth and the laity in general to be more involved in the liturgical life of the Church. Can we not accommodate them all? Don't take away from the older generations what is precious to them in favour of the young who may wish to engage differently. Perhaps there are meaningful options that all diverse groups within the Church can participate in—keep some of our beautiful traditions even though the young do not find them 'interesting or stimulating', add some new ways of worshiping, some new liturgies just for the young, while we preserve what is precious for the older faithful. The Church is surely large enough and sensitive enough to meet these diverse needs. Maybe, reintroduce the idea of ordained deacons, acolytes etc. which emerged not long after Vatican II, but which seemed to peter out. Perhaps we were not ready then. Maybe we are ready now. Maybe that could be a way to provide a ministry for married men, and even women. We, in Australia, are a rich multicultural society. Our own unique culture is not very old. Culture doesn't happen overnight, or quickly. It is usually the living of beliefs and values over many decades and even centuries. Nations have their own unique cultures, which have developed and grown over the centuries, and we in Australia, have the privilege of sharing in some way in the cultures of the many nationalities who now 'call Australia home'. To understand, appreciate and promote a culture you have to be immersed in it, you have to love it and have to want to take it into the future and pass it on to future generations, so that they too can appreciate and love the treasures of the culture. Is there any nationality that wants its culture to die out? Not likely! Our Church has its own unique culture. I believe we need

to look deeply into the treasures of our Catholic culture, rooted in our Catholic faith. Sure, adapt and change to the modern world, but appropriately. The Church is in the world, but not of the world, and we need not to forget that. We gain nothing by denying our Catholic culture and abandoning it for the sake of those who don't like it and want it changed beyond recognition. Let us not do a Mao Zedong who is reported to have 'burned all the books' from the century old traditions in order to bring about his cultural revolution. Confucius did find his way back! Some of our 'traditions', i.e. wearing of vestments at Mass etc. are severely criticised as being not in keeping with the modern world. Even in secular society a livery is used to denote a role, e.g. police, nurses, etc. artistic performances etc. So perhaps there is still a place for them.

As stated by Archbishop Coleridge—Christ has to be the CENTRE of all our discussions, I think I read that he promised that Christ would be the centre of the deliberations. So if Christ is at the centre we cannot go wrong. He is the centre, not us, not the world (which can lead us astray). Christ wants to hear our deepest longings, which the Father has planted in our inmost souls and which only He can reveal to us. But we too need to listen to His deepest longings for us, for the salvation of the world. We cannot go forward unless we make this the reality. In order to bring about renewal in the Church and make Christ present to all people perhaps we need to reaffirm the central role the Mass should play in our lives in our Church life. The Sacrifice of the Mass is not 'old hat', or out of date. For as Thomas Merton once said "The very nature and identity of the Church are inseparable from the notion of Christ's sacrifice. She (the Church) exists by virtue of that Sacrifice, she goes on existing in order to continue that Sacrifice, and her final exaltation will be the consummation of that Sacrifice." Finally, I think I would like to thank the bishops of the Australian Church for giving us this opportunity to share our "joys, hopes and griefs and anxieties" (*Gaudium et Spes*). We need a sense of gratitude, not condemnation for what we have not yet become as a Church in this broken world. We need to remember that Christ 'has overcome the world' already, and by keeping our eyes on him we will not let the powers of evil prevail. Sure, we as a Church need to acknowledge where we fall short and give witness to the love of Christ. This seems old fashioned, but without doubt the devil (if we still believe in him) will be at work and possibly the sneakiest way for him to get the upper hand is to cast doubt and trivialize what has always been central to our Church life. Ecumenism is certainly a wonderful thing, being able to affirm and appreciate how others come to the Lord, but we do not edify them nor ourselves by watering down our identity as Church or becoming what we are not. Celebrate what we have in common, but retain our own uniqueness and identity. Thank you too to [-]. She has been so wonderful. This has been a massive undertaking. I don't know how to contact her so this will have to do. Go ...

A lot of people don't give God a thought so not sure how God or the Church can engage people. No Church attendance means no engagement. We need to look at other ways to engage people. Service clubs have the same issue e.g. Lions.

God is asking us as individuals and collectively and particularly the 'Church' to start understanding and responding to scripture.

To teach the Faith. Catechesis is an unknown word for many Catholics at present. We need to know our Catholic faith so that we can effectively share it with others. Catholic schools need to up

their game in the Catechetics department too—we need more practising Catholic teachers that really know their faith and are living it!

That governance and accountability processes and structures are reviewed and developed so that the future Church in Australia is authentically welcoming and inclusive.

I firmly believe that God is asking us to focus on the teaching of faith. As a cradle Catholic I have had to struggle my way through learning the Catholic faith. Up until I turned 18 I did not know many important things about Catholicism and many of the aspects of it that I do know now is because I have sought out knowledge from many different areas of research. My knowledge has come from less of the Churches' teaching and more from lay people such as Christopher West, Father Mike Schmit, Scott Hahn, Parousia Media, etc. The Catholic Church needs to better evangelise to not only the people not of the Church, but to the people within the Church. Better teaching of real Catholicism should really be our focus.

To use influence more positively, to be more assertive about core beliefs and not 'sit on the fence' on important issues. Better promotion of the good that happens. Need to update doctrine to consider current social context without compromising core beliefs. To increase/improve youth involvement, greater acceptance of youth by older parishioners. Better use of media and technology to spread the good news. People need to live their faith more—spread the good news. Be decent human being—getting along with others not being rude, not being hateful. Follow the 10 Commandments. Working for peace—talk issues through, accepting diversity, don't bully, speaking out for others (advocating).

That we remember that it is Jesus Christ whom we place our faith and trust in as God and/or man with the most intimate connection to God. It is not the Church of Constantine's reign, since then not only largely unchanged, but also seemingly unchallengeable by the "membership". There has to be a lengthy study to ascertain why the absent congregation thinks the Church is irrelevant to them in the 21st century. Is it basic creed, or the structures and adornments? Probably a multitude of mixes of both.

God is asking us to be open to all. It is not enough to say "women are in high level leadership positions in the Church". It is disingenuous and token to say this. Women have no say in governance of the Church—until we see women as priests and especially bishops, women, no matter how high ranking in the Church's corporate structure, will not have a voice in their Church.

Paedophiles in the Church—excommunication for perpetrators. Simple—there have to be Church consequences. Why are the state cleaning up our messes? Equality of leadership representation and opportunities for females in all roles within the Church including the Papacy. More youth involvement and representation. Return to traditional catechism—the last few generations have no clue as to traditional teachings.

As a result of the shocking convictions of Cardinal Pell and other clergy, God is calling us to move away from clericalism... to a Church that has women and married priests and where celibacy is optional. The Church needs to be relevant to modern day Australians, especially youth... contemporary music and liturgies.

We think God is asking us to practise social justice, welcoming and getting to know people from all walks of life, and standing up against the wrongs in our society. We think God is asking us to build connections with people—make the Church relevant and meaningful in their lives. We need to work in our schools to connect students and their parents to the Church. We think God is asking us to encourage and foster lay leadership. The Church has to get back to its earliest roots and become communities of the faithful, calling on lay people not just to fill roles in the Church, but also to provide leadership and guidance.

I agree with Richard Gaillardetz in his conviction that the Spirit is screaming at the Church in the present day. However, unless this voice can be realised at all the levels of the Church, to whom is the Spirit speaking? It seems more like a figurative reality. If the Spirit is heard at all the levels then it will truly be heard by the Church, the response will be realised throughout the Church, and the challenges/errors of the Church will actually be confronted. With this preface, I hesitantly offer this incomplete answer: The Spirit is calling the Church to divine realisation and holy action: the renewed Pentecost. By following this call the members of the Church will become aware in a new way of God working in/through their lives. In doing so, Christians will become conscious of individual giftedness therefore breaking down barriers of division and allow for the healthy forming of a righteous community in/of faith. This in turn is to be realised by the action of the Church, which includes this right-living through community in the world at the service of God's will.

Be inclusive and welcoming (not exclusive and judgmental), and not just in words but in the culture we create within parishes/schools/ministries/agencies, reach out—parishes are not just made up of the people who sit in the pews on Sunday. Put people first, their spiritual needs, inclusion, sense of belonging and acceptance ahead of religious doctrine and dogma, let people know they matter. Engage with scriptures in a personal, transformative way rather than simply using it present a case or argument for or against a particular viewpoint. Be open to the creative spirit and rich symbolic nature of the Bible and our religious rituals, not stifled and enslaved by having to do things the 'right' way for fear of rebukes from bishop/clergy. Be open to learn from others—other faith traditions as well as other Christian traditions. Be brave, honest, open, vulnerable about past failings within the Church—if we don't name and own it, it won't change. Nurture and foster spiritual leadership and discernment amongst lay people, stop waiting for more priests/ religious to meet these needs within our community. Well and truly time for the clergy to come down off their self-appointed pedestals and start walking the talk!

God is asking us to be: engaging, relevant, tolerant, have God at the centre of our focus, not the rules, to work harder to be seen and not forgotten, be adaptable to change, stop just looking at what is considered right and wrong, accept everyone no matter of race or sexuality, focus on diversity (younger clergy, married priests, women), become more relevant to young people, to be proud of our traditions and not 'water them down', focus more on the community and less on the Church building, females in the Church's hierarchy, allow changes to the rules that govern priests, be more accepting of difference and actually celebrate this.

In all the changes that have to, and will occur. Please don't lose that beautiful mystical incarnational quality of Mass (at least sometimes) of deep spirituality. That most lay people unfortunately don't have, or seem to want. I'm sure they could develop it.

We need flexibility within consistency, linking to our heritage which began when Christ founded his Church and has grown and developed throughout the centuries. We need more direct 'education' about our Faith, more education and guidance about some of the burning issues in society today, such as abortion and euthanasia. Maybe God is asking the Church to speak more openly about many of the problems, not just giving the negative moral stance, but responding positively and sensitively to the fears and anxieties of those who support these practices. How can we help people in society to see the importance of our beliefs about abortion and euthanasia? These issues impact on the well-being of society, and are not just a moral stance of churches.

What is God asking of us in Australia at this time? Maybe He is asking us to share and make clear to both those within the Church and outside the Church the treasures and the mysteries that we as Catholics have understood and celebrated down through the centuries—the timeless mysteries of God's gifting to us through his only begotten Son's sacrifice on Calvary and now in the Mass celebrated throughout the world. I think we need to make it more explicit as Catholics what we believe—make explicit among the practising, and non-practising community, and witness to this to those outside our Church. Do we really believe this or is it simply a formalism? Is the Mass and what it represents becoming redundant for modern society? I certainly hope not! The Mass is certainly a 'stumbling block' to Protestants and others outside the Church. How can we witness to its being a living reality? It is not easy in this very secular society. But perhaps if we as Catholics grasp it more deeply and live it more authentically then others may come to appreciate it. On the other hand, maybe it is simply a 'gift' as part of our faith which God has not yet bestowed on others at this point in time. I do not believe that we will do this by watering down the truths, or by making the Mass an 'entertainment'. Surely we do not attend Mass to be entertained and have fun (we can be edified, and uplifted). We attend Mass to offer to God the most perfect act of worship. He, our God, has a right to our worship, and we His creatures, are privileged to be able to participate in the perfect act of worship which His Divine Son has given us. The complaints that the Mass is 'boring' surely cannot be met by making the Mass an entertainment.

God would be wanting us to be open to the diversity that exists in Australia and meeting people 'where they are at'. The Church is too often seen as out-of-touch, inflexible and lacking an ability to adapt to the world in which we live. The Church leadership has done little to address issues such as the role of women or being open and welcoming to the LGBTIQ+ community, despite significant differences in the beliefs of many lay and religious. The Church leadership needs to be more open to meaningful dialogue around such matters. The sacking of Bishop William Morris is a perfect example the poor treatment given to those who are willing to engage in open dialogue with their community. Another example of out-of-touch response would include response to the Royal Commission's recommendations regarding mandatory reporting and the seal of the confessional. Rather than being caught up in theological arguments, there needed to be great openness to the symbolic significance that this could have had for victims of abuse. Developing better connections with young people that create engaging, safe and nurturing environments. As parents of young children we are worried that they will become 'bored' with Church, despite

being a part of a very friendly and welcoming community. Mass is often lacking a dynamic and reflective experience that is inviting for young people. Music is an integral part to worship but it doesn't receive the attention that it deserves. Decisions about music too often exclude young people and do not encourage full participation (one should not have to sing in falsetto to be able to participate in the music at Mass). As Pope Francis recently stated, "to embody and translate the Word of God into songs, sounds, harmonies that make the hearts of our peers vibrate, creating even an appropriate emotional climate, that puts in order the faith and raises reception and full participation in the mystery that it celebrates."

(<https://www.Catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-education-is-key-to-the-renewal-of-sacred-music-36722>). There are elements of Mass, celebration of sacraments and other significant events that are very important to Catholic tradition. However, there are some elements that make participation feel rigid and uninviting. For Catholics who are not regular attenders at Mass, the rules and customs should not be barriers to them being able to participate (examples could include enforcement of minor changes to practices at communion or 'liturgically correct' music at funerals). The definition of what some might consider 'reverent' can be very different and there should be greater acknowledgement of this in what the Church views as 'appropriate'.

To be mindful of other communities (e.g. Protestants in regional areas.) With falling numbers and closing churches, isn't 12 people praying in one venue better than 4 people in each of 3 venues? It makes economic and pastoral sense, we are all praying to God. Our differences could surely be worked out. The schism was a long time ago.

All he is asking of us is to love one another as He has loved us. This is the answer to all problems. If you love truly love the answers you are seeking will come to you

To welcome refugees, to care for the environment, to reach out to those marginalised, to be open to change within the Church, to allow priests to marry if they feel called to this, to deal adequately with the issue of sexual abuse, to allow laity a key role in Church.

It is the Church or better still the hierarchy within the Church posing the questions that suit them. When Pope Francis was elected there was a similar procedure. It appears these surveys are only lip service and one would wonder if this process is the same situation. It also appears that some changes agreed upon at Vatican II have never been acted upon so what guarantee this will be any different? Therefore this effort on my part is probably a total waste of time.

To refresh and instigate a caring mission entered community once called obligatory Church dogma wear it at all costs.

RELEVANCE: How relevant is the Church to young people today? Discussion in one group spoke of the search for meaning by young people and the involvement in drugs and alcohol by some to deal with feelings of sadness and isolation. We acknowledged the positive contribution of so many young people who try to make the world a better place through involvement in ecology, social justice and assisting others. We saw that so many are filled with values of care, compassion and yearning for peace in the world. Why do children not attend Church? Does the religious program in schools focus on the person of Jesus? This was the question put forward by the group. They express a desire that children need to see Jesus as a human being to follow and imitate. LITURGY FOR CHILDREN: Both parents and school have a role in religious education of children. There is a

need for liturgy of the Gospel for children during Mass—perhaps on a weekend. Can both the liturgy and the sermon be simplified? HONESTY: Does the Church practice what it preaches? ACCEPTANCE AND OPENNESS: People had experienced negative treatment in the past when marrying a person not a Catholic. There needs to be more consideration of the venue people choose for wedding and allowances for the actual wedding ceremony to be conducted there. How do we relate to gay singles and couples? Are they welcome? The divorced and remarried need to be welcomed and encouraged to make decisions according to their own conscience. PLANS FOR RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS: One model does not fit all. Planning is needed so that laypersons can be involved in pastoral care. Our area is larger than the state of [-] with only one priest and no future planning for the area. Priests are trained for many years, but lay people have little training. They are increasingly needed to lead and minister to the pastoral needs of their communities. Remote and rural areas need to take an ecumenical approach to worship. We need to think of activities that will draw us closer together. Do we return to visiting other churches on the fifth Sunday of the month? The priest is the Dean of the south west area. We would suggest that a team work with him to discuss future planning and this can be forwarded to the Diocesan Pastoral Council. PROFESSIONALS IN THE CHURCH: There may be i) a role for female priests and ii) allowing secular priests to marry. (It is worth mentioning that the Anglican Diocese of [-] ordained more women than men in 2018.) There is a need to improve the faith education for lay people. We need it for our own spiritual lives and to minister to the community. Courses are offered; however, people are not always able to attend. How can we encourage people to lead services in the future? OUTREACH: We believe that we need to unite people and reach out in care and compassion to those who live without hope. CONCLUSION: We are all on a journey and still learning.

God said, "Feed my sheep." We all need to pass on our faith to the younger generations and to further our own faith education as grandparents, parents, parishioners and religious educators.

Calling to us "Come Back to Me". Base our Faith on Love, not Fear. Work to unite all Christians.

The Church needs to speak more publicly about abortion, not just in Church. Human life is precious, and the life of the unborn child should be treasured. However, the Church needs also to reflect on the positive aspects of our faith and what riches we have. We need to reflect on Christ who took on our broken and damaged humanity. The Spirit is perhaps asking us to be a joyful and welcoming Church and not concentrate on the negatives only. We need to be more trusting and attentive to the Holy Spirit. On the one hand the Church perhaps needs to apologise for hurts of the past, hurts that perhaps turned people away from the Church, hurts associated with regulations which did not unite us as Christians, e.g. Catholics not being permitted to attend marriages of relatives and friends performed in non-Catholic churches. We perhaps need to make sure we do not still harbour that old attitude regarding other churches. We need to recognise the goodness and truth in all churches and perhaps be more ecumenical. On the other hand, however, we need to 'forget the things that are behind' and move forward. Is the Spirit asking us to forgive our Church? Our Church is made up of people who are human beings who fail and fall. Forgiveness is important for us so that we can move on and not carry the hurts of former times. In order to move forward as a Church, we need to reflect on the Mystical Body and how there are so many different ways of living our faith. We are one Body in Christ and in the words of Paul's first letter

to the Corinthians, chapter 12 each part has its own unique role. To this end we need to respect each other, tolerate each other and affirm each other. The older generation respect and support the younger generation's expression of their faith, while the young respect and support the older generation's expression of their faith. Conservatives need to respect and support the progressive's expression of their faith and vice versa. We need to be able to tolerate and support differences within the Church. Perhaps there is a need for deeper understanding and reading of Scripture—not just at Mass. It is important to recognise the deep and many expressions of our faith and commitment. Our Diocesan Publication—[-]—celebrates the different ways our faith is expressed by the many groups within the diocese. These stories, reports, demonstrate respect and cherishing of the differences within the local church.
We think God is asking us in Australia to come together and spread the good news, to be welcoming, accepting and nonjudgmental.
To be stewards of our earth and of each other.
We are called to the service of self and others.
Acceptance of those in our community that are disenfranchised. Acceptance of youth, adults and elderly as diverse but valued members of our Church and acceptance of change.
Change and relevance.
To show empathy and understanding towards others.
After reflection, discussion and analysis, we believe that God is asking us in Australia to be more inclusive and accepting of those in our communities who are marginalized; those who are considered outcasts, different or 'not good enough' for our community. This goal requires all Australians to respect and understand the views, beliefs and practices of all people within our community. Without this respect, we cannot create a more trusting, loving, accepting and forward thinking community in which to serve God in this rapidly changing modern world.
<p>#Develop a deeper faith—a want to be there rather than a fear and have to be there</p> <p>#Too formal and hierarchical—not flexible around baptism, marriage outside the church building, philosophy, need to see the people as the Church</p> <p>#Male dominated—need females who are recognised as equal</p> <p>#Need to build trust after the Royal Commission into Child sexual abuse has hurt the Church's image</p> <p>#Mass is not engaging for our children and youth</p> <p>#The priests can make or break the Church as the grass roots level as they need to be approachable, down to earth, able to communicate</p> <p>#Other faith denomination to receive communion as it is about sharing the meal together</p> <p>#Birth control should not be an issue</p> <p>#Priests being able to marry</p>

#Unmarried priests have unrealistic expectations of families as they do not know what it means to have children, partner, manage work commitments,

#Church needs to keep abreast of the time and the needs of its people.

#Songs and music, prayer to be more engaging

#Focus on developing prayer—we can meditate, reflect

Share/publicise/focus on the history of the Catholic Church in Australia and their contributions—St Mary MacKillop, Sir Edmund Rice,

#Children want to learn about the Church and are interested and intrigued, but it's not engaging enough.

We are finding that the students are having a negative attitude towards Church and are disengaged whilst they are at church. We suggest to overcome this that the students should be involved by; Linking readings to the school context of what we are learning in the classroom. Allowing the students to choose the music at church to make it meaningful, interesting and easy to understand. Having students involved within the Mass. For example research and decorating the church or altar. Ensuring that the readings chosen are easy to understand and are relevant and meaningful.

The Catholic Church in Australia today needs to become more modernized. Making appropriate changes to enhance the relevance of the Church to people in Australia today and to make it more welcoming. These may include enabling priests to marry and have families so they have a real world context on which to base their preaching and understanding of challenges families face. Allowing more lay people, especially women to take on roles in the Church. Both of these may solve the problem of so very few priests in Australia, especially in rural and remote areas to not just preach but be supports in these communities. Having less formality and ritual may help to make the church a more welcoming place. People who do not know the 'rules' may feel afraid to join or participate.

In [-] we have had priests from India, Sri Lanka and Poland. Whilst they are lovely men, we are wondering why we cannot have Australian priests. If it is because there are not enough priests, then what can we do to build the capacity and the formation of the model of priests and how the career of priesthood is valued. Often you don't feel welcome in the Church. Younger families are judged for noise etc. It was said that priests don't seem 'normal' in that they cannot have a relationship, if they choose, that is, be married or have a partner. It was said that priests may be out of touch with the real world. While the group understand monastic life, can it be considered that you can still be faithful and reverent with a partner. Rural communities are so lonely and isolated, by priests marrying or being able to have a partner and even a family could boost priest numbers in rural communities? It was mentioned about 'hypocrisy' in the Church, that the Church has lost credibility. Music and bands need to be more uplifting. The Church needs to be more engaging for young people. Young people are our future. It was said by a young member of the group that they would feel they would be more likely to get involved with the Church if they were approached by a young person from the Church. The Church needs equal opportunities for all, regardless gender or sexuality. Young people do not feel that they are valued or listened to. We

need to support young people and young families. To suit more families, church can be at other times or by internet. Families are so busy today with weekly commitments, the commitment to the church can often be at the end of the least. If church times were more flexible and with a variety of ways to deliver the Mass, then maybe more people could be involved. More children need to be involved in the Mass. The 'Exodus' to Sunday School equivalent is confronting for some parents as they do not know what is being said to their children in another room. They are with their families so should stay with their families. Because priests are not married and are not day to day embracing families lives, could maybe have more understanding about families, how they work, the difficulties, the pressure. Maybe more understanding, and tolerance. We had a priest who had built wonderful relationships throughout the entire community, Catholic and Non-Catholic. He was respected and loved by all, all ages. He had a great sense of humour. He listened and he was kind. Without warning this priest was taken from our parish and sent 200km away to another parish. He didn't want to go, but he knew he had to follow what he was directed to do. As a parish there was massive sadness and disappointment because we had lost our priest whom we all loved and respected. Ironically 8 years later he is still being called back for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals of families and friends.

*To become an authentically Australian Church which supports such Australian values as a fair go for all, mateship, support for the underdog, etc., which doesn't come across as arrogant and having ALL the answers to life's complexities, which wins back the respect of the Australian public (eating much humble pie), which quite rightly relies less on the Roman curia and more on the promptings of the Holy Spirit for our people.

* Become believably authentic by language (revisit the current wording of the Mass using Australian wording), by structure (less reliant on an ordained priesthood), and by outreach.

*Be a voice which challenges Rome, standing up for the Australian people and our wonderful clergy (including Bishop Morris—perhaps a public apology to him and our diocese for the way he was so abominably treated).

* Allow the State to go back to having responsibility for marriage, the Church sealing the union with a formal blessing afterwards.

*Be serious about the role of women and laity in the Church—female deacons, optional celibacy, lay administration of, say, the Sacrament of the sick.

* Continue issuing the excellent annual bishops' statements but be a bit more radical about Australian society e.g. the obscene money earned by executives and top sporting people—greed—how much money is enough?

*Make our parish communities smaller, with trained female/male leaders. (I once heard that the building of the Cathedrals in Europe sounded the death knell of the Church in Europe.)

*Select a spokesperson for the Episcopal Conference—not necessarily a Bishop, not necessarily a male—who is articulate, a clear thinker and a good communicator. The Conference often has good stuff to say and the Australian public needs to hear that. (Archbishop [-] of [-] in times past was an excellent communicator.)

Your Grace Catholics (and actually the whole world) need to hear, loud and clear, authoritative teaching from our bishops regarding matters of faith and morals. The basics would be the unconditional love of God and His forgiveness, mortal and venial sin, good/evil, the Commandments, the Sacraments (especially the need for Reconciliation and the requirements of receiving the Eucharist worthily), rejection of the culture of death (abortion, contraception, euthanasia), and the Four Last Things. These topics are just a sample of neglected Catholic teachings. It is incumbent on the bishops to ensure that Catholic education is indeed Catholic. Textbooks and other resources used in seminaries, schools, catechetical programmes, RCIA instructions, etc., must contain clear Catholic teachings, not dumbed-down versions, and certainly not complete contradictions of authentic Catholic teaching. To avoid liturgical abuses regarding reception of Holy Communion—especially at Easter and Christmas, funerals and weddings—the officiating priest should advise the members of the congregation that they are welcome to approach the altar for a blessing, but not to receive Holy Communion unless they judge themselves to be worthy, practising Catholics. The priest should not invite the congregation, en masse, to receive Holy Communion. Church leaders should aim to make God better known and loved, and to make people holy, through imparting the fullness of our faith. How will the Good News be proclaimed? These days, most Catholics do not go to church, so do not hear any teachings from the pulpit. Therefore, the bishops must use any and all means of communication to spread the Good News—perhaps a weekly newspaper column, a blog, a ten-minute TV session once a week, and using social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook). Of course, the world will object, but that doesn't matter—at least people would know where the Catholic Church stands on important issues and articles of faith. At this time in Australia, we believe God is asking us to start evangelising again, as the early disciples did amongst the Jews and pagans. Bishops must take the lead as teachers. It is useless to expect parents to teach the Catholic faith to their children—they no longer know it. At least two generations of Catholics are lost to the Church. Thank you for this invitation to have our say.



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 can we make the Church relevant to the thousands of young people being educated in our schools?
2. What opportunities will there be for equal gender opportunities in Leadership?
3. How can we guide Catholics in pursuing social justice that includes the unborn and the upholding of God's plan for marriage and family?
4. How can we invite those from other faiths into the Catholic fold without denying or compromising on our faith and our liturgy?
5. How can we make the public prayers of the Church (Liturgy of the Hours) more available and "normalised" in Catholic Schools in lieu of very creative but often-misleading individually developed "liturgies" and prayers?
6. When will we remove the barriers excluding people from ordination to the priesthood?
7. When are the laity going to be educated about communion/community as an essential dimension of Eucharist?
8. How do the bishops plan to rebuild the lack of trust between themselves, the faithful and the general public over the scandals, cover ups and denials of clerical wrongdoing?
9. How do the bishops plan to address the sense of over-entitlement and superiority complex many demonstrate and inflict on the very people to whom they are meant to be servant leaders?
10. How can we involve the young?
11. Are the three rites of Reconciliation clearly understood? Is the First Rite still relevant? The questions of 'sin', is it watered down? These questions need to be addressed by the Church.
12. What will be Australia's 'model of Church' that will suit and be applicable to rural, regional, country and city?
13. How will the Catholic Church change to reflect the current needs of our society?
14. Are the structures and organisations of the Church that has served us for the last 200 years, going to serve us into the future?
15. Has the current and past structures and general organisation of the Church been successful in ongoing evangelisation?
16. Will the Plenary Council dismantle the structure of clericalism & give laity their rightful place in the Church?
17. Will the Plenary Council look into the principals of Ecumenism & apply those inter-faith practices to the Catholic Church in Oz?
18. What is the role of the "corporate" bodies (schools, hospitals, welfare agencies etc.) of the Church in living and sharing the message of God?

19. What is the future for lay led liturgies and Ecumenical services?
20. How to rebuild trust after the Royal Commission?
21. How can we build a sense of belonging to our church and local community?
22. How do we engage the youth and make it meaningful?
23. Why are young people not engaging in the Church the way they used to?
24. Why can't priests be allowed to marry to encourage more priests?
25. How do we best move on and recover from the failings and negative media on the Church in the past?
26. How do we make stronger connections with the community such as including the youth in parish life (parish council or events)?
27. How does the parish priest become more connected and engaged with students in the classroom?
28. How can Church interact more fully with the community?
29. How can we modernise the Church – interactive, music, technology, and liturgy?
30. How do we get a youth group established – games, services, activities, sponsor a sporting team?
31. How do we make Church more accessible for the disabled and those living far away?
32. How can the Church be more open to all people?
33. How can the Mass be more interesting?
34. How can the Church continue to serve our community locally and around the world?
35. How do we explore more creative ways of leadership models e.g. married clergy, women priests, and pastoral leaders?
36. How do we minister to the vulnerable i.e. refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, isolated and lonely, poor in spirit?
37. How can the voice of the local church communities be more readily heard?
38. How can we be more engaging in our Church liturgies and celebrations?
39. How do we make technology our friend?
40. How do we effectively challenge people who have left the Church to come back for a second look?
41. How do we challenge the growing influence of the secularism, consumerism, individualism etc. in our modern world?
42. How can we promote the equitable distribution of wealth locally and globally?
43. What roles will be opened to each baptised person, in carrying out the ministry of the Church, and the ministry of the Gospel message of Jesus?
44. Why is there nothing about the Sacraments being taught to the youth?
45. Where are the fundamental values of the Bible taught within the schools?
46. At our current rate of priest attrition, how are we going to keep operating?
47. How can the Church address the confusion in the Catholic Church?
48. Evangelisation—as a faith community how will this look in the future? What are our target groups and how do we manage these groups?
49. How can priests be encouraged to focus on the pastoral life of their parishes instead of the upkeep of buildings etc.?



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 40 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.

I look back with gratitude to my parents who were faith-filled people and lived out their faith in what they did. I also grew up in a pre-Vatican II Catholic parish so we were supported in our faith development. The YCW had an enormous influence on my faith development especially coming to understand that the Gospels were relevant to my daily life. Adult faith formation has played a big part in my post Vatican II faith experience.

I am from India and was born and brought up as a Christian (Catholic). All the beliefs and concepts about Jesus and Church what I have at the moment are all gained in India. I was also rebellious and still on and off feels rebellious against Church which on and off acts contrary to the teachings of Jesus. The way in which the deeds of some Church authorities and priests in developing world whose lavish life style is unimaginable for common men and Jesus, will be making Church go through the same situation which the European Church has gone through. But I believe in the teachings in New Testament and Jesus and try to frame my life based on this. However the faith of my wife in Jesus, making her to live without worries and tension, makes me also at peace with the world and all diversities and controversies in it including Church. I would like, other people in distress also live wisely and happily in the wisdom of God and Bible (New Testament) like what my wife has shown to me in Jesus. I feel that I should not be selfish to keep the change I am feeling in Jesus to myself but want others also should feel it in this short worldly transit. My wife and thereby me find solace in Jesus through Church and so we like Church to be there for our children and the generations to come making them to live peacefully in this turbulent world in Jesus.... I feel that I have a conceptual deep knowledge in New Testament which I acquired through studying Bible in school years and I strongly believe that the life of Jesus in New Testament is more than enough for modern man to emulate to live peacefully. I feel that Old Testament is just a non-essential add-on ... Since practicing New Testament is difficult in modern world, we expect Church to help us through its sacraments...Now, the Australian and European Church is fearful of the Government and even its people to fight for Jesus. The Sunday Mass speeches [homilies] are getting lifeless from fear of its own believers and the Government.... Priests are preaching as if in confusion of what to say and not...It feels like Church needs Government more than its believers in Jesus... These are few things I am feeling about Church here. Rituals are essential for human life though many are irrational and unscientific. Religion also needs it. Life and deeds of the people

other than priests and nuns serving in church should be more humble and motivational for others including youngsters....

Not at the moment—I have run out of time. And I need to think deeply about that, and not just prattle on.

I need to think about this more deeply. I believe he has (in the words of Deuteronomy) 'surrounded (me), lifted (me) up ... Like an eagle that watches its nest that hovers over its young. So He spread His wings, he took (me) placed (me) on his outstretched wing." He has guided me through my sinfulness, my weaknesses, my struggles, my doubts, my joys and my love. In the words of St Catherine of Siena "with kindness and pity beyond words the Eternal Father gazed on my soul and began to speak...." Is that an experience of faith to which you are referring?

I have a few Christian living close friends who belong to other denominations. When we visit each other we go to church with our host friend in the spirit of ecumenism. The experience is spiritually satisfying and creates a stronger bond in our friendships and reinforces the fact that we all worship the same God as we strive to be Jesus to others in our everyday lives. My friends and I are always welcomed into each other's communities and that is a truly beautiful thing.

I'm disappointed that so many of our Catholics are now opting out of active membership of our church. We now have lost the age group from 12 to 55. What can we do to bring them back? It is now impossible to reach them and they now show no interest in the Church.

As a married Catholic man, I recognise that I have been living with a calling to priesthood, which has come to the fore as a result of my life experience, which includes becoming a parent.

As a cradle Catholic, I enjoyed a comfortable childhood but elected to leave the Church for a time in my adolescence. My parents always accepted my choices but let me know when they did not agree with my choices. When my choices adversely affected the family I was asked to discontinue them at home—and was even told I was not able to live at home if I demonstrated some behaviours. My father, who in my mind is a model of The Loving Father, always made it clear that I was loved and that I was welcome at home but that there were boundaries around acceptable behaviour. This model of family led me back home and back to the Church. The Truth with love and charity.

My lived experience of faith over the last few years has eroded any level of trust that the Church hierarchy are really concerned with the people as opposed to the infrastructure. I realise that not all bishops are so self-absorbed but it only takes a few for the image of the Church to be tarnished and the relevance of the Church to be made redundant.

One member shared this story for uploading. In line with living the TRUTH handed down to us from the time of Christ, my experience as a divorcee living a celibate life for over a decade has been difficult. Accepting the TRUTH of life without a partner after divorce has not been easy, but it is what Christ said in the Gospel. By honouring this, I am able to participate fully in the life of the Church and live my faith. The Mass is very important to me.

Reading in the Australian Newspaper how Higher Education institutes seem to be leading a world-

wide opposition against Christianity. This is a concern. These institutes have power over the minds of young and old.
I had a rotten childhood. Abused and with little self-esteem, God has been my coach and I am truly blest. I have learned that the persecution taught me what not to do and I see the world as a beautiful place and one that I can enjoy day to day.
Variety of experiences of Church and of community and most lively seems to be from rural/country, where individuals gather to pray together, regardless of denomination; and after formal prayer (Church), there is shared time to support for each other. The focus is people and it is a personally nourishing experience.
Sharing of a story of attending a funeral in a Church, where the only people verbally involved in the prayers were the clergyman, the musician and one other person. The comment was that the music added to the reverence and the atmosphere of the ceremony.
I was originally influenced by my father and also various compassionate and wise priests, nuns and Marist Brothers who spoke about and showed compassion and empathy.
The general feeling from this group is that the first step to requesting an annulment of marriage is to approach a priest—and it seems that the attitude of the priest towards this process can have a strong impact on whether the person proceeds with the whole process. It seems that 'the priest' appears to be passing judgement on the person from the outset.
I see my family and friends turning their back on the Church. I see the Catholic schools doing a great of evangelisation, but at a parish level there is nothing. I see the modern Christian churches flourishing, they are building massive worship halls and expanding their worship times and options. Personally, I wish that I had joined a modern Christian church when my children were young, so that my children would have lots of other kids to learn with and play with after Mass. Currently my children are often the only children at Mass and often I am one of the youngest in the Church (I am 46). I feel and see that the Church in Australia is desperately broken and in massive need of repair. I sense that the community, my family and friends are seeking a strong and courageous Catholic Church.
I recently participated in a Baptist Bible Course with a friend, a fellow Catholic. I hold great respect for all Christian denominations. I found myself asking many questions and sought the answers through research. I have a renewed strength in faith and zeal to find out more about my Catholic faith, which I had taken for granted. I have continued my own Bible Study and am loving the bottomless well of life the Bible is. God is calling me back. The Spirit is moving in my life. Miracles are happening every day. We just need to stop, acknowledge them and give thanks.
Our beautiful parish has given me a community I never knew could be exist. The support our family has behind us is more than I could ever imagine. Our priests work tirelessly to engage us in the world and broaden our view of what is around us and how we can affect change for the good.
The group who prepared this submission was made up of women 50 and over. All had remained faithful to the teachings of Jesus but all felt deeply disappointed with a Church that did not recognise them as full and equal members of the Church with men. Several had children who were divorced and who did not feel welcome in the Church. One was divorced herself and every

time she takes communion she thinks in her heart that the Church does not welcome her at the table. She takes communion in secret. All had children who were disengaged with the official Church despite being good and loving people who stood for the rights and dignity of all.

No particular story of faith, however some general comments came from the group: (1) language of the Church—inclusive language which gives the feminine side of God; (2) all who are baptized are equal in carrying on the work of Christ—the hierarchy of the Church does not reflect this; it points to a misuse of power from hierarchy; and (3) language again:- the oft-spoken "Fr. So and so's parish"—again, emphasis on cleric, no recognition of the laity who make up the parish community, some of whom may have a longer-standing connection to the parish than the current priest!

Many in the group have lived in smaller country communities and happily recant incidents of inter-faith co-operation—from clergy as well as laity. All agree that the community was bound together in this spirit of co-operation—civil, as well as faith. It seems that the statement, presented by someone in the group, "I am a Christian, practicing the Catholic tradition" is a summary of the openness of Ecumenism; and an opening of conversation about Christian faith experiences and practices. Another comment from one of our groups in relation to the current declining numbers of clergy and of Church-going Catholics: We are fighting to keep our Church—what will happen if our Church is taken away? How will we feel if our Church is taken away? It's a good point to keep our changing and challenging circumstances relevant at a personal level.

We spoke about each person having the right and responsibility for being respectful of others and helpful to others—tenets of Social Justice. As individuals, we respond in different ways to injustices we see/hear about; we all need to be alert to what is going on! An example in [-] (Feb. 2019) is an advertised event organised by Members of [-] Association, on the issue of 'Pornography, young people and sexuality today'. We applaud this group on their initiative and will ask our Parish Pastoral Council to write a letter of support to this group. Individuals from this discussion group will put forward their own responses to this initiative as well.

Our now-deceased priest from 82 till 95 had a great grasp of what Vatican II meant for the Church and we were well prepared to be a parish without a resident priest. In the eighties, we experienced Life in the Spirit seminars which enlivened our community. Unfortunately, some of the leaders joined the local Pentecostal Church so we no longer have a prayer group and we are an aging community. Children get confirmed and make their First Communion and then we never see them despite the fact that we invite them to social occasions.

My first experience of the Catholic Church was being married in 1951 at [-] a Church in [-]. It saddened me that I was married in the sacristy—the back room. My mother, father, family and guests were left in the Church with no flowers or music. More importantly, they did not see me, the bride. The witnesses were the only ones present. After the wedding, my father's comment was, "This is the worst wedding I've ever been to but the reception will be the best." I felt hurt for my guests and my family. Despite this, I helped my husband rear the children in the Catholic faith. They attended Church each and Bill was involved in the Church e.g. A member of the St Vincent de

Paul Society. I attended Church for milestones in their life. In 1995, I became a Catholic and am very involved in the Church. I became a Catholic because I felt a Catholic.

Catholic schools have played a major and important part of my life for a considerable amount time. My wife has been a teacher in Catholic schools and my 4 children have all been educated in Catholic schools. During this time, I have seen wonderful work done in the schools, in evangelising and developing the faith of students, parents and staff at these schools. Personally, I have had my own faith challenged and strengthened by my involvement in school organisations and attending school functions. I have recently moved to a different town and have been told that the schools are primarily education facilities and as such the focus must be on academic outcomes rather than being a true Catholic and Christian organisation. This is a great disappointment to me as I have watched as my children have achieved excellent academic outcomes in a true Catholic Christian community. I have been part of RCIA and Confirmation programs where participants would not have been at the ceremony, except for their involvement in the Catholic school (I have also listened, with pleasure and pride, to other parents describe the school as "a good school, a bit much God stuff, but still a good school"). I will forever have strong memories of my son's valedictory Mass at [-] College, where there was such genuine and enthusiastic participation by the students in the Mass. My hope is that all Catholic schools will continue to be true Catholic organisations, especially as it provides such great opportunity to evangelise and grow faith. However, we must be realistic and if this is not possible, we need to ask, "what is the best use of these facilities and the associated resources?" As a parent, I have always believed that I have the primary responsibility in developing a Christian faith in my children, however for a faith to properly grow, it needs nourishment from other sources. For me and my children this has come from our parishes and schools. I believe that the Church needs to ensure that there are many opportunities for faith development available to all people in Australia and that Church organisations have this as their primary goal and responsibility.

- [-] Church, [-] —Xmas Eve Mass 2018. Brilliant! It was all about Jesus and the parishioners.
- Many of our school liturgies are held in our stadium. These need to be in the church so that our students can know the Church and its significance.
- I would love for my teenage children and some of the youth that I teach to be able to experience the vibrancy and beauty of Church and the Catholic faith—Antioch comes to mind.

"Do you have a story of your experience of faith, life of the Church which you would like to share with us? If so please provide details here...." Every person at the meeting expressed that in their experience, there is a lack of connectedness in our own church community itself. I would venture to say that this is indicative across most of our Mass centres. One of our ladies had been worshipping at the same Mass centre at the same Mass time for years and barely knew anyone. I have been at the parish for just over a year, and have made a point to meet people, however, when I see parishioners in and around town, they don't respond to my greeting. That again is indicative of the experiences of the participants at our meetings. There seems to be a lack of connectedness in the worshipping community. If we can't connect with each other, how then can we connect with the wider public?

One member shared her pain that one of her closest friends, a person who lived such a Christian life in every sense of Christian values, does not belong to the Church. She is a beautiful Christian person, and it saddened her that her friend was not a member of the Church. This emphasised the fact that it is God's choice, God's gift to us, and how grateful we should be that he gave us this privilege, even if it came about because we were born into a practising Catholic family.

Experience of faith! I am a teacher at a Protestant Christian College. We have regular 'Devotions' and 'Chapel' (which mirrors the Protestant Sunday services)—all of which we must attend during our school day. I have no problem with that. It has been a very edifying experience. I have witnessed the genuine and deep love and commitment to God of my colleagues. They love God so deeply and are very expressive in the way they show this. I am somewhat hesitant to make this comment, because I know how deeply they love God and how sincere they are in showing it. But I cannot help but compare it with our sublime worship in the beautiful liturgy of the Mass. The Mass is geared from the beginning to focus on Jesus Christ offering to the Father the most perfect act of worship on our behalf, and our invitation and ability to unite with Him in His worship and love of the Father. They have their songs and prayers and some Scripture and perhaps exhortations (sermons) and to these they commit 100%, but how precious is the gift that we Catholics have when it comes to worship. It is He worshipping, not us; but we are permitted to unite with His worshipping act. I often wonder why God has been so gracious as to invite me, a truly puny human being, to worship with Him. In the words of the second Eucharistic Prayer "We thank you that you have counted us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you". Don't let us water all this sacredness down to our human creations to satisfy the crowds. The people of the Reformation did this. Don't let history be repeated, don't let it happen in our times. Don't water it down, and don't rationalise changes to fit in with the crowds, to get them in. We (I) don't want our worship to mirror that of the Protestant Churches, even though I know that they please God in their own right and that they are 100% sincere.

- My school is friendly and welcoming.
- I find that some Masses can be excluding and not engaging.
- I wish we could have more modern upbeat music—there are some great songs.
- I enjoy the Three Saints Festival at our parish.
- Living in a small community, I would like to experience Masses which are vibrant and uplifting but this is difficult when our parishioners are elderly and we have hardly any youth attending Mass.

Inspiration of seeing prominent people turning from a less than Christian life to commitment to Christ. The example of Justin Bieber becoming a committed Christian could/would be an example and inspiration to many young people. He had been somewhat promiscuous prior to committing to being a Christian and this could help young people to value a Christian life.

I am fortunate enough to belong to a parish led by a priest who is 'going forward', who recognises the difficulties and challenges people face and who never judges others. He obviously listened when his mother said "If you don't have anything nice to say, then don't say anything at all". He has worked tirelessly to develop a strong community, a sense of belonging for everyone not just

those who "measure up". But that is all under threat with the lack of priests. If/when he is no longer able to serve us we will be expected to attend other Mass centres even though we would be capable of providing meaningful celebrations from within our own community.

People do not like the hypocrisy of priests preaching one thing in Mass and the Church as a whole doing the opposite.

One member of the group was very impressed by Fr John Reilly SJ's comments in the Catholic Leader and it spoke to him about his experience of faith. This is quoted: "When we listen to the Scripture readings each Sunday, it is important that they be read slowly and clearly, so that people can hear the words and have time to interiorise them There are three moments in hearing the word of God: The first is the "Hidden Word of God" already existing in every person who has ever been born, from the beginning of human history. It is hidden from us because it is the presence itself of God in each one, giving human life as Creator and offering a share in divine life as Reconciler, but we are not aware of this word. Since in Christian faith, God's being is inseparable from God's word, this presence of God as Creator and Reconciler in the life of every human being, speaks to us through the whole of our humanity and in all our human experiences. To become aware of this we normally need a trigger from outside us. This is the second moment when the word of God is spoken to us by another or sometimes by the action of another, especially by the Word of God in the Scriptures. This 'formulated word of God'; may be called the 'prophetic Word of God'. The Prophetic Word remains abstract and sterile until it interiorly links with the Hidden Word already unconsciously present in the life of the hearer. When this link happens, we have the third moment of God's word, the "Living Word of God". Only this word has the power to enlighten, energise and to call a person in freedom to that deeper awareness and union with God, briefly described in a verse of the New Testament, "Hebrews 4:12". Even though the same Prophetic Word is offered to all in a homily at the Eucharist, the Living Word triggered in each one will be different, according to the different Hidden Word already present in each one. God speaks to each of us differently.

Not so much a 'story', as a pertinent comment: Anything that is living has to change in order to stay alive and relevant. It seems that Plenary Council 2020 is doing that for the Catholic Church in Australia.

I have joined a church where music and community are considered priorities, where all age groups are catered for, where creativity is encouraged. I have felt closer to God than I ever did in other churches. I feel like the people at my church take the Bible seriously, they are committed to their faith and openly talk about God.

I love being part of my parish—the church with a small c. It is about community, looking out for the disadvantaged, conversations. I get very frustrated with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church that is with a capital C.

Growing up post Vatican II, I served on the altar as a child, learnt Latin, and later became a Special Minister. My wife and I extolled the virtues of Marriage Encounter around the State and now find our children following in our footsteps. In the military, I lead Military Christian Fellowship groups and we attended the Character Leadership Course. My faith is and has been in Jesus: "Salvation cometh to none..... except it be through repentance and on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." —not

rules and regulations and I hope this opportunity, which the Church has so kindly afforded us, will not fall on deaf ears. None of my responses are meant as a criticism, but rather as an encouragement to move forward into a new history by going back to the fundamentals of the early Church.
Following Vatican II I expected a robust and relevant Church having real influence in the world of today to emerge but I experienced leadership that to my perception denied the reality in which it existed.
I have started attending [-] College Australia, a Catholic education establishment which focuses on the Liberal Arts. Within my first year of attending the college, the knowledge in my faith grew exponentially. Yet what [-] teaches is simple yet covers all boundaries of the Catholic faith which are not so simple. I pray that this institution can be somewhat of an example.
Many years ago I was involved with a parish in [-] that used to be very 'liberal' by today's standards. They had the 3rd rite of reconciliation and the church would be packed with standing room only. They had a wonderfully prayerful liturgy that left you feeling exalted when you walked away. When that was banished and the 2nd rite introduced, the numbers dropped right off. It was still a meaningful liturgy but it lacked the powerfulness of the Masses.
An engaging Mass with lively music and engaging liturgy always provides parishioners with a greater desire to participate in Mass and thus feel a closer link to God. As a young person this engaged me and I found myself closer to God.
My faith came to life in a small group sharing process about 30 years ago. Up until that time I carried out all the rules and regulations with a dead heart and was on the point of leaving the Church. At the end of one of these sessions as we sang the song which included the words "the longing in your heart I will fill as I now make my home in you" I had a profound sense of Jesus standing behind me with His hand on my shoulder. My whole inner demeanour and reaction to my faith changed. No one can preach Jesus to a person, I feel you need to experience your own personal Jesus. For so many of my friends this has happened for them when they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit ... but unfortunately time and time again I see this being resisted by most priests, religious and laity. Two years ago, my husband was given a terminal prognosis with only months to live. After healing prayer with a priest all the cancer in his lungs and stomach were gone, much to the amazement of his oncologist ... and yet, this priest was all but driven out of his former parish because he was 'different'. I am still waiting for realization of Vatican II for the breath of the Holy Spirit to sweep through our Church.
Just two years ago I went to a five day silent retreat in [-] run by Benedictine monks. The first two and a half days was mainly about preparing for a general confession. This was a huge moment in my life and to receive the Eucharist after that was a blessing I can't put into words. I was raised a Catholic but like many new people to the Church I can't believe how the Church seems to undervalue confession. It is such a place of victory and returning to Christ.
Even as a child I couldn't understand why the Church discriminated against me as a female through exclusion from priesthood. While becoming a priest may not ultimately have been my pathway and at that time as a child I did not yet know, I felt, even so that the Church's view of my

participation and contribution was diminished by their position. If I am an equal disciple why does my sex preclude me from ministry as a priest?

As a convert to the Catholic Church from the Anglican Church I truly felt most alive in the faith when I first attended a Traditional Latin Mass. The reverence, beauty and awe for Almighty God struck me as my spiritual needs were not being sufficiently met at most Novus Ordo Mass.

Originally, we grew up in the Philippines. Our faith had been formed through our parents. Our parents would always bring us to church every Sunday and all festive days of the Church. There's a saying that goes, if you can go for a party for many hours, the Church Mass is only one hour. So why fail to go. My faith in God has helped me a lot especially in time of trouble. I know God is there with me always and the church is my refuge. I like going to church. In our group, we share how lucky we are to be connected in the church. For myself as a single mother, my faith is the only treasure that I can pass on to my daughter without limit. God is good. Hopefully more Australians will turn back to God and serve Him without reservation. Our life is a greatest gift from God.

a. [-] parish places importance of children being blessings i.e. all children are asked to go to the front of the church to receive a blessing from the parish priest, there is also a cuppa after Mass which help people feel welcome and want to be there. b. Personal Healing of life's hurts experienced through CCR.

The dismissal of Bishop Bill Morris caused great damage to the Diocese of [-]. He received very little support from his brother bishops and was denied natural justice. We should not only preach justice but practice it—something missing in most of the hierarchical structures of our Church. He should receive an apology from the Vatican and from Australia's bishops. The most demoralising thing I have experienced in 50 years as a priest.

My comments re: Marriage Annulments. I agree no one should live in abusive marriages, whether it is physical, emotional or deprivation of any kind. In these cases annulments should be both easier and quicker. However, in non-abusive marriages we need to look at both sides. In a case involving a relative of mine, the husband wanted an annulment to be able to re-marry. My relative, after 25 years of marriage and 4 children could not, in conscience, declare to the tribunal that "they did not know what they were doing" when they married. Her vows and integrity were important to her. They are civilly divorced but still married in the eyes of God. The husband re-married in a non-Catholic Church and has since moved on to another partner. For non-abusive marriages the partner needs to be considered as well as the one seeking annulment. There is inevitable pain on both sides of the relationship.

What is my opinion about liturgy? I am aware that many people, especially the youth, like the "modern" songs and melodies which can give a psychological high. There is definitely a place for this. However my personal view is that by tossing out many, if not all, of the "golden oldies" we have denied many people the only theology they ever get. It is an unconscious re-affirming of the great truths of our Faith. An example: "O Bread of Heaven, beneath this veil, Thou dost my very God conceal". I realise the language is not accepted these days, but surely once a week we can overcome this attitude for an hour! The more we hear these sentiments the more open we are to

the truth behind the words. I also believe that the lack of reverence in the Church equates to "out of sight, out of mind". The church is not the local hall—the two have different functions. In this life of haste and noise, we sometimes need to make contact with the core of our being where Jesus lives. What are my thoughts about non-priestly Ministry? Ordained priests are necessary for the life of the church in the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation and I believe that this should be carried out by men alone. We have permanent male deacons to assist the priest. I believe however that there is no reason why women cannot be ordained to the permanent diaconate. They were present at the very beginning of the Church's existence. However it cannot and never can be a stepping stone to ordained priesthood. We have wasted so much time, energy and vital ministry on the question of women priests. We talk about "service" but really this demand for women priests is more about ego and power. What are my thoughts about Lay People and Ministry? I can see no reason why lay people cannot minister to others in the form of Anointing or giving the Last Rites. There are many ways where lay people can assist the parish and are already doing so. Perhaps we need to look at widening this area.

- More accepting of others;
- Priests can get married. Less work to become a priest. Sing John and Jesus at every Mass!
- Women to be allowed to become priests, priests being allowed to marry, not being avoided when paying tax, less strict rules around who can join the Church;
- Should priests be able to marry and have a family?
- The Catholic Church needs to be more accepting. The world is changing and religion needs to change with it;
- The money that the Church raises should go to the local community (farmers etc.);
- When will priests be able to get married? Will there be more support for regional Churches in Australia? Would it be possible to run more Youth Masses in Roma's Catholic Church?
- Why are priests not allowed to marry? I think that they should be given the opportunity to marry. Also I think that female priests should be allowed;
- Priests allowed to be married;
- Come to a mutual agreement on the LGBT community;
- When will you accept the structural change within society and adapt before dying out entirely. "God loves everyone";
- Why won't you let gays get married?
- Why won't priests get married?
- Help with natural disasters;
- What direction is the Church going in the future?
- Priests should be allowed to marry, the Church's relevancy in modern society;
- I think the Church needs to consider about allowing the priest to get married;

- I also think that the Church should stop making wood statues as it was forbidden in the Bible;
- I think the Church should be more progressive and modern in its teaching;
- I think priests should be allowed to marry.

My Parents were both Catholic migrants from [-] in the seventies. My greatest memories of the Catholic Faith in Childhood were going to Croatian Masses at times in [-] ([-] and [-]) where Croatian Franciscan priests held Mass. Sunday always had Mass celebrated twice in the mornings with the very large church buildings completely full and people always standing out the back or outside also. There was always a great choir with Sisters involved and the faithful sung loudly as one with all their souls. This would lift up anyone's spirit attending Mass. The priests spoke with great authority and love, loudly and clearly without fear, not holding back from the truth that God wants us to know and that we need to know. Only priests gave communion and only they still do. I hope that our Australian bishops can decide to strive for more of this kind of Faith, reverence and leadership as this is what our Youth hunger for and the older generations need to know in their old age. Bishops and priests should not fear revealing the Truth to the faithful and those in Australia and the world who are seeking happiness, which only comes from God in all his revealed Truth.

I attended some 9 years of boarding school from 1964 to 1972. This contributed to a good foundation in my faith along with my parents' example. A local parish priest for 10 years from the 1980's did not support young people and when I prepared for marriage seemed to be only interested in baptismal certificate, provided no real marriage preparation. I was granted an annulment of my marriage in 2012, even though the process was complex and exhausting, I found it to be very healing. I do feel the lady who I journeyed with during the annulment process was exemplary in her role.

I am extremely fortunate that my personal experience of faith has always been positive and uplifting. I am however, feeling sad and demoralised by the current focus on the abuse suffered by many at the hands of clergy and the associated cover up.

In spite of my criticism of the way things are run and the seeming mindset of those who run the show, I chose to join this outfit many years ago. Sometimes I'm not sure why, especially when I hear the stories of some who grew up as Catholics. They are still going to Mass but only because they are too afraid not to. There is no personal commitment and no joy or fulfilment. Those who 'taught' these folk did a 'good job' and they thought they were saving souls from hell but not enough has been done to set this right and in some cases it won't ever be set right. I count myself fortunate that I grew up a protestant and that I was able to choose to belong to the Roman Catholic Church. I was welcomed into a community of people in a country area where I worked and these were the ones who influenced and led me to be confirmed in the Church. The Sisters of St Joseph were an educating and guiding voice also. I have met many good and wise people in my journey in the Church but I have also had to deal with the results of mentally ill, addicted and otherwise damaged individuals who held positions of authority and did not always treat those in their care with respect and compassion. I'm still hanging in there because I believe in the Church

that Jesus envisaged and so do many others who work every day to bring God's kingdom to this world.

I am a 71-year-old single woman who has always been very active in the church. My faith was nurtured in a very Catholic home living with our Lebanese grandmother and great grandmother. We prayed the Rosary every night with my grandmother leading it in Arabic until dementia overtook her. I am the eldest of 10 children, 8 of whom are still alive. I have numerous nieces and nephews and now to the third generation. Sadly, very few of them attend Mass on a regular basis. My mother's faith was strong and she embraced change in the Church with enthusiasm. My father went to Mass but was often sceptical of the Church. I had two uncles priests on my mother's side of the family and my father's family in another State often looked after priests. I grew up surrounded by family and people of faith. I went to a Catholic school run by the Sisters of Mercy and was fortunate enough to be leaving school towards the end of the Second Vatican Council. After leaving school the nuns educated those who were interested in the new liturgy. It was an exciting time in my faith life. My siblings and I were involved in the parish in many ways whilst at school and after we left. In the 70's, 80's and 90's, there were many Renewal Movements in the Church and it was always transforming to participate in these. I owe my openness to a balanced view of Church to these Movements. I believe I live and breathe Church and am still very actively involved in liturgy, Sacristan and RCIA when we have groups in the parish. I attend Mass daily—this is where I draw my strength from and I would be all sold up if I didn't have faith in God. Thankfully this faith is supported by good priests and people. The Church has been good to me and I have been able to attend many Seminars and Conferences relating to the work I do as a volunteer more often than enough at my own expense in later years. I am no Academic and have never been in a position to do formal study. Through reading and seminars I have been able to further my knowledge on topics I am interested in. Even though the Church is going through rough times in Australia my strong faith carries me on and I cannot imagine life without faith or commitment to the Church community. I am truly blest to have the support of good friends not all local, to encourage me in what I do. This helps me to encourage others to become involved in the parish. The Church has helped to shape me to the person I am over six decades and I know I am not alone when I say I share the pain of those hurt by the Church and hold them up to God in prayer. I pray that the Church in Australia can move forward with this Plenary Council and that it will become the foundation of a new and vibrant Church where everyone feels welcome and accepted.

I want to be able to be myself in my faith community without my deep faith and its expression being squashed all the time.

I went to boarding school at [-] and I was moved by the MSC priests and I would go to Mass with some of my friends on a Friday and Saturday morning. The 5 MSC priests would attend and it would last about a 1/2 hr Fr [-], and [-], [-]. They would give a short sermon and it was just the icing on the cake of a wonderful experience having gone to school there. One of my class mates has become a deacon which I attended his ordination recently and it is the first time I had witnessed what had happened to me at [-] to happen to someone else.

The most positive influence shaping my faith stems from the writings of Richard Rohr and the pastoral efforts of so many grass-roots priests and nuns and lay people.... Unfortunately I feel

betrayed by the college of cardinals and bishops who have allowed the curia to use the world's Peters pence to support their palatial existence, the anti-Christ activity of paedophilia and its cover up.

I am a young married woman with five children. My husband and I are currently home-educating the two eldest. We are practicing Catholics and are part of a vibrant parish in [-]. I wish to share a personal experience of the Church in Australia, particularly regarding Catholic Education. I attended a Catholic high-school in [-] in 1999 and 2000. I noted that there was only one other student in my grade (of approx. 120 students) who attended Sunday Mass. I never saw any of my teachers at Mass. In an exam during Religion class, I remember completing a fill-in-the-blanks question where a few words had been blanked from the Creed. This was the most teaching of the faith I saw in my two years at this school. I also remember feeling saddened when, during one religion class, a normally unruly classmate (13yr old boy) was asking serious questions about the Catholic faith—unfortunately the teacher was not able to answer his questions nor direct him to where he could find the answers. In her defence, she did apologise and state that she was not a Catholic but an Anglican. I still wonder how many teenage boys (who were in that critical point in their lives where they are forming their own identity and beliefs) missed out on learning about Jesus Christ and the richness and beauty of His Church because no one was able to teach them. Upon hearing first-hand experiences of parents in our parish who sent their children to various Catholic schools in [-], my husband and I would not send any of our children to these schools, but (if we were not home-educating) would rather send them to a non-denominational Christian school instead. Most of our many practising Catholic friends have either done this for their children or home-schooled them. I think that speaks volumes about the lack of trust Catholic parents have in Catholic Education at present. I feel it is such a shame that there are so many wasted opportunities for young people to be exposed to the Faith. As a young person, I was blessed to be part of a vibrant Church community and had family and friends who encouraged me to grow in my faith. Thankfully, I was able find the resources I needed (mostly via the internet) to learn about the Faith of the Catholic Church and give me a solid foundation to build on which I can now pass on to my children.

Up until I was 17 I had no idea of the sanctity of body and marriage, I only knew and viewed my faith (that part in particular) as strict rules that needed to be followed. It was not until my brother in law lent me a Christopher West disc on the theology of the body that I began to understand the beauty of Catholicism. Throughout the whole CD talk I was shocked about how beautiful the Catholic view on marriage and the body is, at many points in the CD I was brought to tears because of how much I had missed out on throughout most of my teens. Since then I have strived to seek more knowledge of my faith and have been hungry to understand those important and special aspects of Catholicism, so that I can one day teach my children and pass on the knowledge of the beauty and important of understanding Catholicism.

I am the son of a Catholic mother and non-practising Anglican father; mostly a Catholic education. Living with decent people reinforced the example of Jesus learnt during that schooling. A negative for me was an over emphasis on "crime and punishment", which my wife and I chose to avoid with our children, not diminishing the importance of discerning right and wrong, but emphasising positive (love) living within community. I've devoted more time to a deeper understanding of my

religion since our children were born in my early middle age. That has brought highs and lows, obviously not giving all the answers—in some cases causing new dilemmas—but in a way calming. I have found some priests not useful, others wise. It is, ridiculously, a bit depressing to learn that all priests are not wise!

As I sat in Mass, I looked around. It was a packed Church for sure, but over half the seats were filled by students from the attached school. The majority of "the people off the street" were at least 20-30 women, some with kids in tow, about 5 or 6 had a husband with them. It struck me, that up the front was a man preaching and what almost felt like "mansplaining" faith to me from a pulpit of slight privilege. I am sure he is a good person and has all the best intentions, but I feel I have no connection to the priesthood—we are different genders, he doesn't have a spouse or partner, he doesn't have children, he is not worried about finding a job, he's not worried about bills or a mortgage, I will not know the burden of offering guidance to a congregation, I will not know how hard it is to offer spiritual protection to people....etc. I felt keenly in that moment by seeming to elevating this man above me, I felt so disconnected from the Mass I was hoping to enjoy.

All the beautiful, deeply spiritual retreats and retreat days that I have attended over the years have been led by Catholic nuns or Catholic lay people. Why do they not have a place in the leadership roles in the parish?

I grew up in a loving family, and a wonderful small parish. From this, I learned never to underestimate the faith potential in these spaces. Since then, I have had both very positive and very negative experiences of Church through different communities and relationships. In the end, however, the depth of faith has always emerged from the seeds planted in my youth. Moreover, this has taught me what kind of Christian I do and DO NOT want to be (and feel called to be) as I live out my vocation that I received at baptism.

One member shared how she was so inspired by Brian Moore's article "Forgiveness central to being Christian" in the Catholic Leader (Nov 25). "Only Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us." It is Emmanuel that makes Christianity unique. This is what makes the Christian faith more than a philosophy or a legend.... The Incarnation is the tenderest, most revealing, most daring love letter ever written. I love you so much. I long for you. You cannot become as I am, so I will become as you are. You cannot reach Me, so I will inhabit you. There shall never be anything between us ever again. Your darkness is now My light. There is no part of you I refuse. I withhold nothing from you."

What has shaped me? Initially, my Catholic upbringing, and parents and teachers who believed in these mysteries and imparted them to me. In addition to that, the witnessing of the reverence with which our priests celebrate the Mass, and the obvious belief in what they are doing at Mass. It is so inspiring and affirming. These are 'strong' men, not weak-headed, hysterical women giving witness to these mysteries. They are so obviously totally absorbed in what they are doing and give witness by their example. Finally, the homilies at Mass, as well as some of the beautiful writings of many of our priests and theologians whom I have understood as upholding our beliefs in the 'real presence', the sacrifice of the Mass etc. Theologians such as Karl Rahner SJ, Cardinal Hume

OSB, Edward Schillebeeckx OP and many others, and of course the documents of Vatican II. These are all treasures beyond all telling and understanding, and are worthy to be shared and loved.
World Youth Day was significant for both of us in the formation of our faith. The Youth Ministry that existed in the lead-up to WYD was also significant for us, since 2008 there has been a declining emphasis placed on this ministry (to the point where there is no longer anyone employed to lead this ministry in our diocese).
My intellectual thinking about some contradictions in doctrine. Commandment: Thou shalt not kill. Catechism: this means take proper care of your own health and life and live in peace and charity with your neighbour. Problem: with violence, poverty, stress, AIDS, the 2 dictums contradict each other and the World Health Organisation. Solution: use condoms in personal relations.
I have been a Religious for 61 years, living a satisfying and fulfilling life. I was blessed with parents who lived their faith. My focus has been on letting people know they are loved by God. I feel privileged to have inherited faith and to have had the opportunity to spread the Good News to many people.
The Church hasn't shaped my life at all only my belief and faith in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit can do that and the sooner the powers that be acknowledged that fact the better. And although I attend Mass every Sunday and other weekday Masses, I would have to say it's watching Dr Charles Stanley every week that has given me much more insight into the Holy Bible than anything else. This ministry is called In Touch and that is probably a good description not perfect but not like our Church that is so far out of touch with everyday people. I have almost left the Church on a number of occasions and one of the main reasons I've continued is because of my devotion to the Holy Rosary. I have only recently visited the Holy Land, which only strengthened my faith in God but did little for my faith in the Church so unless there are some significant and meaningful changes made the day maybe come where I would reconsider my options.
The deplorable conduct of what was supposable teaching skills, which was delivered as no respect for the student to which they administered abominable cruelty.
For almost 8 years I have ministered in [-] parish in [-]. We are a small but eager group of worshippers with an average of 16 people attending most Sundays. The priest is based in [-] and is the Priest Director for the parishes of [-], [-], [-] and [-]. It is a difficult task and he is close to retirement. There are no other ministers of religion resident in [-] so we are very much on our own. I have taken it as one of my major responsibilities to train our people so that they can lead Sunday liturgies and four people have been trained to conduct funeral services. Another priority is to cooperate with the Anglican and Uniting Church people. If they have no visiting minister for Easter or Christmas, I invite them to attend our liturgies. [-] has the largest Aboriginal population in the southwest corner and Aboriginal funerals attract 200-400 people. We are hoping to attract an Aboriginal person to serve in this capacity Our parish includes [-], [-] and [-] so it involves a lot of travelling. The land has always been sparsely populated, but with the ten-year drought, many people have moved and may never return. We do not have many resources and our

community is ageing and decreasing in size but we are trying to stand on our own two feet. I have found that living and working in this hot, dry land is harsh but it brings much joy into my life.
Two members shared their very special experiences in relation to the issue of abortion and respect for life. One member had been a paediatric nurse and had cared for many extremely sick babies. These babies were cared for lovingly no matter how deformed, or sick they were. These were precious little souls and nursing them make it so clear how horrific abortion (killing the unwanted, or less than perfect baby) is. Another member recounted his experience in supporting a young couple whose baby had been born with a very rare disease with a short life expectancy. The problem was discovered in utero at 38 weeks, but the parents were determined to give him every opportunity to live, and to make every minute of his life count. Their respect and love for this little life, their son, was so inspiring. He was called [-] the Warrior.
Different parishes can have very different messages and levels of engagement. If you are lucky enough to have celebrated in an engaging welcoming stimulating congregation your faith is nurtured and restored. Churches and congregations that have not aimed to be relevant to contemporary society have lost the faith of those who they ask to attend. There is a need to address the hypocrisy that greatest "pillars of the Church" are often those with the least Christian behaviours in the community.
We are 4 Catholic school teachers who see firsthand the disengagement of students in Mass.
I have grown up in the bush and lived here all my life. I went to a Catholic school until Year 3, when it was closed. I then had to attend the local State school. I went onto Catholic school to board in Brisbane. I married a Catholic and our children are Catholic. They attend Catholic schools for their entire schooling. I teach in a Catholic school. I love being a Catholic with Irish and Irish heritage. I am worried we are going to lose our identity particularly in rural areas of Australia. My request is come out with a group of you from the Plenary Council or some of you who live in the cities and visit us and take an interest in where we live, what we do and how we are living our lives as Catholics in rural areas. With thanks [-]
* We are shaped by wonderful men and women who live the gospel. We won't be swayed by argument or words.
We are all sad that our children, educated in Catholic schools, no longer practise, nor believe in, the Catholic faith.

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 Toowoomba.

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	126
India	1
Ireland	2
Malaysia	1
New Zealand	1
South Africa	1
Sweden	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7
Zimbabwe	2
Not stated	33
Total	175

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
St Anthony's Parish, Toowoomba	400
St Joseph's College	70
St John's School	60
St Mary's Parish Charleville and St Patrick's Augathella	55
St Saviour's College	40
St Mary's Parish	35
St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe	30
All Saints Parish	25
St. John's Senior Students Roma Qld.	25
Basanovic and Birchley Family	25
Sacred Heart Parish Cunnamulla	17
Our Lady of Lourdes Newtown Friday Group	17
St Joseph's Secondary School, Stanthorpe	14
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	14
St Mary's Parish	14
Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office	14
Our Lady of Lourdes, Toowoomba - Group 2	12
Mary Of Southern Cross Plenary Council (Youth and FamiliesFocus)	12
St Mary's Parish	12
St Thomas More's Parish Pastoral Council	11
Crow's Nest Parish	11
Mercy Spirituality Group	10
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick Qld	10
St Thomas More's Parish	9
OLoL Friday group	9
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish	9
St Anthony's Parish Pastoral Council, Toowoomba	9
St Theresa's Parish Pastoral Council	8
Men Alive, Warwick	8
OLoL Friday group	8
St. Joseph's parish Stanthorpe 4380	8
OLoL Friday Group	7
Care an Concern Team at St Theres's Parish	7
OLoL Friday group	7
St Theresa's Parish Toowoomba. Monday Evening Group, Red Team.	7
Our Lady of Lourdes	7
MARY of the Southern Cross Parish Council Highfields	7
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick	7
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick Qld	7
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School	7

Name of group	Group size
St Patrick's School St George Qld 4487	7
St Theresa's Liturgy group	6
St Theresa's Parish Toowoomba	6
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School Toowoomba	6
Our Lady of Lourdes	6
OLoL Friday group	6
St Mary's Parish	6
Assumption College, Warwick	6
St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba	6
Our Lady of the Southern Cross College	6
East Toowoomba Deanery Meeting	5
Concerned Catholics Toowoomba	5
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick Qld	5
Cell Meeting Group in Warwick	5
St Mary's Parish	5
Our Lady of the Southern Cross College	5
OLSCC	5
OLSCC	5
OLSCC	5
Five Friends in Toowoomba	5
Primary Catholic Principals	4
Toowoomba Catholic Schools	4
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick	4
Ecumenical prayer group	4
St Patrick's cathedral Parish	4
Crow's Nest Catholic Parish	4
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick Qld	4
Toowoomba Catholic Education	4
St Finbarr's School	4
Group 1 St Mary's Warwick Qld	3
Toowoomba Catholic Charismatic Renewal Diocesan Service Committee	3
Informal small family group	3
Dore Family	3
Group 1	3
Group 1 St Mary's Parish Warwick	2
Concerned Catholics Toowoomba	2
St Thomas More's Parish	Not Stated
Our Lady Of Lourde	Not Stated
Sacred Heart Parish	Not Stated

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