

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

Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

A Report to the Archdiocese of Brisbane

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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

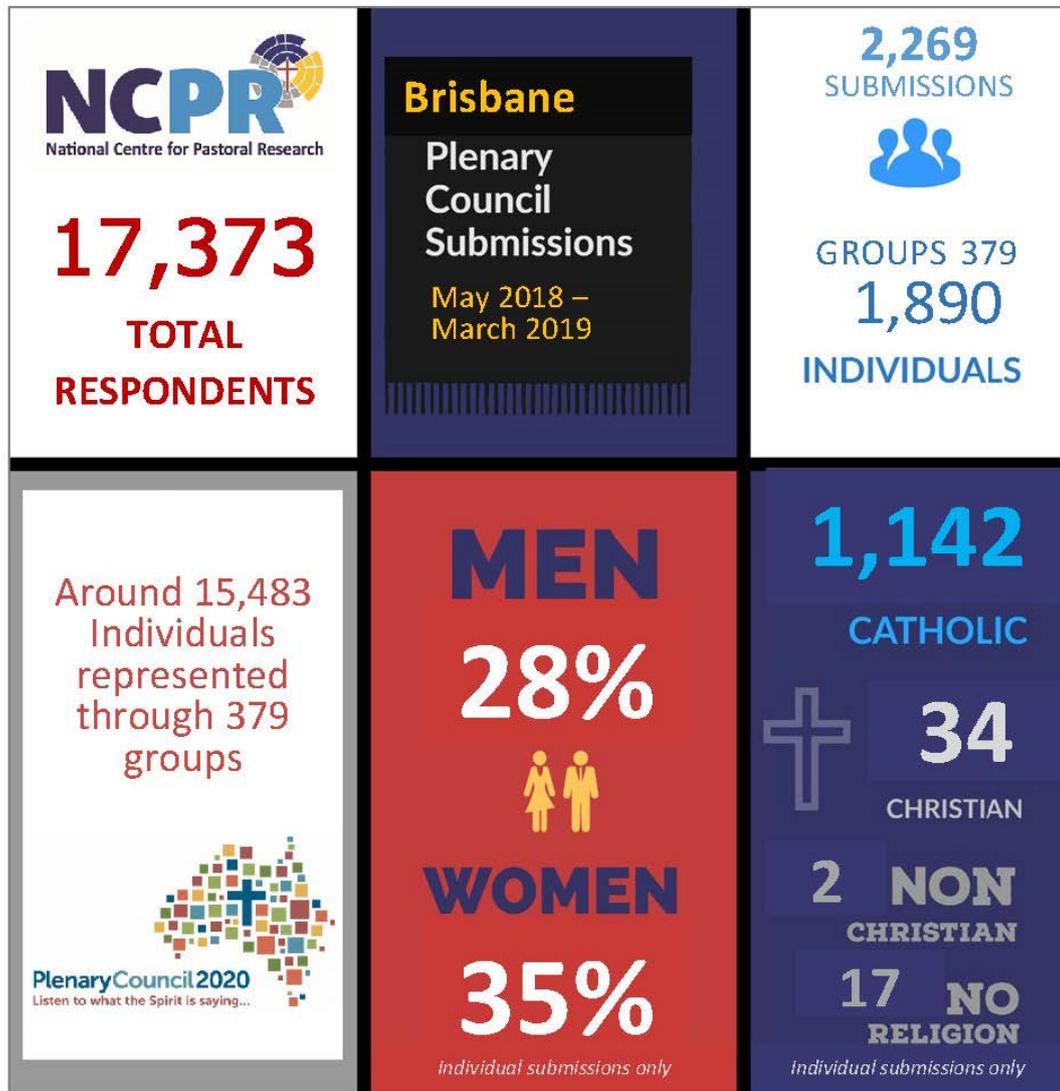
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Diocesan Submissions Summary Snapshot: May 2018—March 2019



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 - Brisbane

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

From the Archdiocese of Brisbane, we received a total of 2,269 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 897 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 294 were unsure if they had. About 591 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 2,269 submissions, 379 submissions were from groups or organisations and 1,890 submissions were from individuals. There were 15,483 people represented through the 379 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 17,373.

Table 1: Number of Submissions	
Total number of submissions received	2,269
<i>Participated in Listening & Dialogue Encounter?</i>	
Yes	897
No	591
Not sure	294
Not stated	487
Total	2,269
Submissions received from groups or organisations	379
Submissions received from individuals	1,890
Total	2,269

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 1,890 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 Brisbane. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 39 per cent (744) 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 (138 responses).

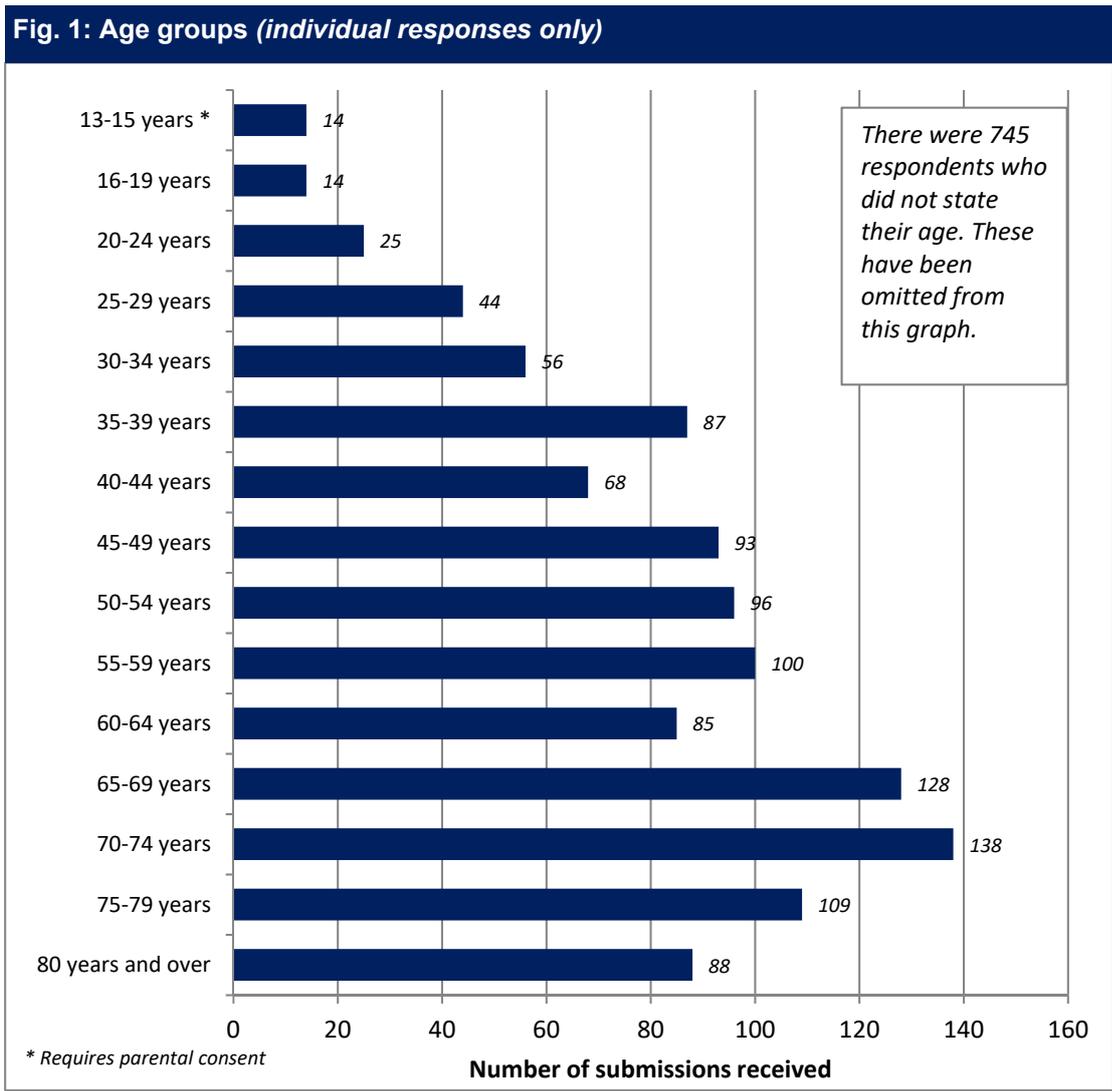
At the close of submissions, there were 53 individual submissions received from those aged under 25.

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 14 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 14 individual submissions made from this age group in your diocese.

13-15 years *	14
16-19 years	14
20-24 years	25
25-29 years	44
30-34 years	56
35-39 years	87
40-44 years	68
45-49 years	93
50-54 years	96
55-59 years	100
60-64 years	85
65-69 years	128
70-74 years	138
75-79 years	109
80 years and over	88
Not stated	745
Total	1,890

* Requires parental consent



Sex of Respondents

A little over a third the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (35%), while a further 28 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 519 men and 663 women who made submissions. Seventy-eight respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 630 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)	
Female	663
Male	519
Prefer not to say	78
Not stated	630
Total	1,890

Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (74%) were born in Australia. Just under 13 per cent came from other countries, while around 14 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	1,390	73.5
Brazil	14	0.7
El Salvador	7	0.4
India	7	0.4
Ireland	12	0.6
Malaysia	6	0.3
New Zealand	19	1.0
Philippines	15	0.8
South Africa	18	1.0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	41	2.2
United States of America	8	0.4
Other Countries	86	4.6
Not stated	267	14.1
Total	1,890	100.0

Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	1,390	73.5
Other English-speaking country	101	5.3
Non-English-speaking country	132	7.0
Not stated	267	14.1
Total	1,890	100.0

Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	794	42.0
Other English speaking country	128	6.8
Non-English speaking country	197	10.4
Not stated	771	40.8
Total	1,890	100.0

Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	777	41.1
Other English-speaking country	134	7.1
Non-English-speaking country	199	10.5
Not stated	780	41.3
Total	1,890	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 were 12 individuals 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	12
No	1,139
Not stated	739
Total	1,890

Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 1,890 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 1,142 respondents (60%) were Catholic. Thirty-four respondents were from other Christian denominations while there were two from non-Christian religions. A further 695 respondents did not state their religion and 17 respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)	Person	Percent
Catholic	1,142	60.4
Other Christian:		
Anglican	16	0.8
Baptist	3	0.2
Lutheran	2	0.1
Orthodox	2	0.1
Salvation Army	1	0.1
Uniting Church	5	0.3
Other Christian	5	0.3
Non Christian:		
Other religion	2	0.1
No religion	17	0.9
Not stated	695	36.8
Total	1,890	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 896 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 136 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while 45 respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 65 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

Table 7: Religious description <i>(for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)</i>	Female	Male	Not stated	Total
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	451	411	34	896
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	104	29	3	136
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	11	6	1	18
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	23	4	0	27
Other	27	24	1	52
Not stated	5	7	1	13
Total	621	481	40	1,142

GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 379 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 15,483 individuals were represented through these groups. However, 62 groups did not report their number of participating members, indicating that the total number of people represented through the group submissions may be considerably higher.

While 278 group submissions provided a group name, 101 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 any 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 the Ignite Conference 2018 with around 1,500 members. There were also a number of other parish and school groups such as the Mt St Michael's College with 980 participants and Our Lady of the Southern Cross Parish with 800 members. There were six other groups with 500 members or more.

Name of group	Group size
Ignite Conference 2018	1,500
40 Days for Life Brisbane Inc.	1,000
Mt St Michael's College	980
Our Lady of the Southern Cross Parish	800
St Ignatius Parish	500
CCR Brisbane	500
CCR Brisbane	500
St Maximilian-Kolbe Parish at Marsden, Queensland	500
St Patrick's College, Gympie	500
Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement	427
St Mary's College	355
Veterans Care Assn.	350
Carmel College	350
Southport Catholic Parish	300
Emmanuel Community (Brisbane) & Men Alive	300
Southport Catholic Parish	200
All Hallows' School	165
Dutton Park Parish	140
Loreto College Coorparoo	140
Mother of Mercy Parish - Hendra/Northgate/Hamilton, QLD.	133

Age and Sex of Group Members

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

The under 20 years age group was the largest group represented with 3,509 members. This was followed by the group aged 50-69 years with 2,061 members. There was no age provided for around 1,698 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	3,509
20 - 29 years	1,349
30 - 49 years	1,906
50 - 69 years	2,061
70 and over	1,286
Unknown	1,698
Total	11,809

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

Of the total 12,302 group members whose sex was reported, 61 per cent (7,492) were female and 39 per cent (4,810) 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	7,492
Male	4,810
Total	12,302

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
- Sacraments
- Leadership and Church Governance
- 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)*
 - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God (p. 29)*
 - *Greater focus on the Word of God (p. 31)*
 - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching (p. 32)*
 - *Care for neighbour (p. 36)*
 - *Better faith formation (p. 38)*
 - *Renewed call to holiness (p. 35)*
 - *Keeping the faith (p. 33)*
 - *Being a witness in society (p. 34)*
- 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)*
 - *Restoring the Third Rite of Reconciliation (p.75)*
- Leadership and Church Governance (Chapter 7)
 - *Greater role for women (p. 83)*
 - *Ending clericalism (p. 80)*
 - *Greater involvement of the laity (p. 84)*
 - *Greater leadership from bishops (p. 87)*
 - *New leadership and governance model (p. 91)*
 - *Greater leadership from priests (p. 88)*
 - *New model of Church, diocese, parish (p. 93)*

- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
 - *Greater inclusion of all* (p. 108)
 - *Fighting for human rights issues* (p. 110)
 - *Ending discrimination of LGBTI* (p. 110)
 - *Care for the environment* (p. 112)
 - *Care for the family* (p. 115)
 - *Putting Gospel values in action* (p. 115)

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

- *Outreach to youth* (p. 124)
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith* (p. 151)
- *Sharing the faith with others* (p. 128)
- *Inclusion of the divorced and remarried* (p. 46)
- *Better teachers in Catholic schools* (p. 148)
- *Listen to one another more* (p. 136)
- *Different translation of the Mass* (p. 56)
 - *Emphasis on: New translation of the Mass (inclusive language; p. 56)*

SUBMISSIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

In keeping with these guidelines therefore, the submissions that follow are only from those individuals or groups who consented to having their submission being made public and being shared with their diocese. About 53 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.

I think that God is asking Australia to reduce the margins between the very wealthy and poor. Australia is a bountiful country yet many people live below the poverty line. A single mother with three children, renting on the private market and working for \$20 per hour! \$600 a week gross salary. The rich have the \$15 million dollars houses and prestige cars. Many Australians cannot even provide food and clothing for their families. The situation is even worse for Aboriginal Australians. Mabo 1992 (Brennan J) promised much for the Aboriginal population. Nothing has been given. Our governments are made up of many lawyers who preach justice for all. Australian politics is one great window dressing exercise. Politicians only care about staying in the seat of power and amassing as much wealth as they can. I do think that the Catholic Church is much better. Wealth seems to be paramount in the minds of many Catholics. It is time for the Catholic Church to practice what it preaches and engage Australia to help the disadvantaged. Put away all the regalia and let those willing to assist, assist. I would be pleased to 'go to bat' for the disadvantaged. Efforts I have made at my local church have been shunned. I am not one of the 'in' crowd.

1. Equality of subsistence for all citizens. 2. Australia—overcome the greed. Most wealth is in the hands of a few. 3. Resurrect democracy in Australia. 4. Overcome human rights abuses. 5. Return to God. Few people seem to recognise God in their lives.

For me, I feel a call to a practical theology, similar to a liberation theology where the Church reaches out to those in need, the poor, homeless, (long term) unemployed and actively seeks to engage and help. I feel that a stronger (practical) stance on social justice and the environment that seeks to actively involve the Church and its members.

While lay involvement is getting better, and the Church does listen I would love to see a Church that involves the laity more, gives more of a scope for the laity to participate in the management of the church. I would also love to see a greater scope for single men (who want to marry) to be able to become permanent deacons, and greater scope for lay men and woman to be involved in ministry as deacons or something similar (similar to the way the Anglicans do).

I believe our Church needs to welcome back disenfranchised Catholics and to encourage active participation by stepping back from the rules that exclude them. We need to return to the welcoming community that Jesus proclaimed—one that does not judge, one that does not condemn, one that does not say to "outsiders" that they are not worthy of belonging and participating, one that recognises sinfulness exists in us all, and that we are called to step out and engage with the world, encouraging all to be as Christ-like as possible, by using our actions and not our words to represent Christ.

To get back to Gospel values. To have a genuine preferential option for the poor. To make everyone genuinely equal in our Church, male and female. To get rid of clericalism, an evil in our Church, as Pope Francis has said. To allow parishioners to decide who governs them and how their governance will be transparent, consultative and accountable. To have leaders who read the signs of the times and apply Gospel values in addressing them. We urgently need to address critical issues including climate change, homelessness, poverty, the terrible famine in East Africa and Yemen, the human rights abuses of West Papuans, the plight of refugees and the growing inequality in Australia. To have an effective system for addressing grievances in our Church. To call for the resignation of any parish priest who does not have a parish pastoral council. To call for the resignation of any bishop who has covered up child sexual abuse or transferred paedophile priests around, rather than dismissing them and reporting them to the civil authorities. To have healing liturgies in all parishes to help healing from the terrible sexual abuse that has happened in our Church. To have a symbolic emblem in every Church so that we will never forget the child sexual abuse issue. To properly compensate the victims of child sexual abuse in our Church. To ordain married men and also women. To stop importing priests from overseas countries, because of language and cultural problems and to encourage those who are here to return to their home countries. What an insult to lay people to not involve them in running their own liturgies and govern themselves, but to import Nigerians and Indians—people with very different cultures to ours. To give lay people the opportunity to choose their bishops.

I think God is asking of us in Australia to:

- Change Church governance so that the laity are treated as equals with the clergy. A study of the origins of the Church will show that Christ neither willed nor established any structures which are unchangeable. Parishioners need to be able to appoint their own lay parish Administrators and parish Boards of Management.
- Acknowledge that only when the Catholic Church stops operating as a monarchical and autocratic institution, will we halt the 'Mass exodus of people from the Church.
- Say NO to clericalism "a deviant culture of social elitism, entitlement and privilege which developed out of a particular theological understanding that, at ordination, a man's very being is

elevated to a level of existence superior to that of other human beings. The grades of hierarchical rank, status and power are integral to this distorted culture. Many priests, however, would probably reject these notions now. Clericalism, nonetheless, has had an extremely negative impact on Catholic life for centuries. Appalling misuses of clerical power, lack of accountability, shared responsibility and transparency have been felt at every level of Church life.”

https://www.Catholicsforrenewal.org/Governance%20and%20Culture_Ann%20O'Brien.pdf

- Accept the truth of what Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council points out: this Royal Commission confirms previous reports that cite the lack of accountability and transparency within the Church's culture, the propensity for clericalism to create a self-protective caste where power and privilege are the operating principles for addressing conflict and personal promotion, and, finally, where the image of the institution meant more than the welfare of children.

- Expedite a process of fundamental and theological and interdisciplinary reflection about the causes and implications of the child sexual abuse crisis, and discern new theological approaches to the body, sexuality, gender and the child, that are informed by contemporary experience and scientific understanding, not just scripture and tradition.

- Involve other Churches, and also civil governments, in funding and creating special Centres for research to inform improved teaching practice in governance and ministry and also to provide training, accreditation, professional development and best practice professional/pastoral supervision, all of which could be done under the auspices of the University of Divinity?

- Accept in full all the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and go even further by embracing a thorough reformation of Church theology, structures, governance, leadership and culture, and in so doing return to the teachings and example of Jesus.

- Accept lifelong responsibility for all those who have been harmed by sexual abuse in our Church institutions and ensure that the testimony of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse is always heard.

Firstly, to listen to the gentle breeze (the lone voice) as God is not to be found in the roaring of the mighty, in volume and in numbers. Secondly, we should attend to the results of the listening of the last 5 years in the Royal Commission. This independent examiner showed us that the Church has lost its way in Australia, and has allowed a toxic culture to develop, which is a suicidal act. Perhaps God is speaking through the Commission, which investigated sexual abuse especially of minors, but found the cause, not just the symptom. We ignore this voice of God at our peril. (I will upload an article on this topic).

ORDAIN WOMEN It is common knowledge that there is no reason why women should not be ordained

To stop the evil discrimination against women and gays. I can see that the only hope the Catholic Church [has] is by ordaining women. Everybody knows now that there is no reason to ignore this fact.

To stop treating everyone especially volunteers as if they were paedophiles/abusers and treat them as responsible people—refer to uploaded material. It also needs to seriously consider Pope Francis' "The Joy Of Love" para 105 ".... Yet we keep looking for more and more faults, imagine greater evils, presuming all kinds of bad intentions, and so resentment grows and deepens. "To me, this is what the Church is doing and it is not helpful. Also, for the leaders of the Church to show some leadership. In Brisbane, during the recent poll on same sex marriage we only heard "I am voting no" with no biblical reasons why and also during the recent review into abortion legislation, we heard nothing (people could almost be forgiven for thinking that the fifth commandment no longer applies). `An example of the leadership I am talking about would be to raise topics which we should think about during an election, etc. (NOT about the current crazy carbon/climate change debate which are based on extremely limited time periods and information and do not consider the much longer term changes or cycles the world goes through e.g. the 800 year cycle).

Holiness, Justice, Reconciliation. For me holiness means having Knowledge of Belief in and Trust in the Blessed Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy [Spirit]). This Knowledge, Belief and Trust all need to grow and develop by regular reading of the life and times of God in all their aspects, which are recorded in the Bible. The Catholic Church has a 3-year cycle of its Bible readings on a daily basis and our reading and reflecting on these each day is recommended as an excellent way of developing our individual understanding and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. An even better way to more clearly understand is by discussing these readings with a small group of others. Should we not regularly read and reflect on the scriptures we are left somewhat bereft and only hear the words as spoken by readers and priests at Sunday Mass. Justice. The simple meaning of justice is fair play in our relations and dealings with others. God himself gave to humanity the rules of justice in his 10 Commandments passed down thru Moses on Mt Sinai. If we lived by these rules of life we would indeed live a very good life. God believed these (10) rules were sufficient for us to keep our lives simple and uncomplicated. Reconciliation—For me this simply means forgiveness by forgiving others whom we may think have wronged us in some way. Not waiting for forgiveness to come from them first but by instigating our forgiveness first. Good healthy friendship is a powerful tool and if we use this tool well many healthy friendships will be developed across the world. Like if we consider we have offended God by failing to Honour and acknowledge him we do also seek forgiveness from him and in conjunction with this forgiveness make a decision to change in this area. Doing these things will transform/change our lives so imagine how many more lives would be enriched for the better if we did these things collectively. If every parish formed small groups meeting together regularly (weekly or fortnightly) with these goals in mind just imagine how the parish would be transformed and likewise the City transformed and so on.

To share our faith with others with humility, charity and courage so that others can come to know and love Jesus

God is asking us to be change-makers. To challenge our society as it is for a better world. For family, this means holding true to our Church's teachings, but listen and appreciate others' points of view. To not be condescending implied or not when we respond. To be loving. As a mum of three under five, it is essential that our parishes are welcoming of children and engaging for them

so Church is not somewhere where we get in trouble because by nature we run around a lot. For the family, it is essential we continue to challenge laws around abortion and to continually approach our community with a rights centred view on this, i.e. the rights of the child, woman and father. It is not trendy to be pro-life and we need to continually challenge the secular society we live in with the gospel messages on love of life, family and children. For family, there is sadly a continual disintegration of the family unit with split families seemingly ever increasing. This to me, is more important than our views on same sex marriage. Children are suffering as a result. How can we, as a Church, provide support to families who are split apart or considering that split. We need to do more than the status quo here and I'm sorry that I don't have any answers. For the environment, we need to all be doers of the word here and Pope Francis' encyclical. We need to urgently as a people in our Church challenge our own lifestyles. Then, we can spread the word by doing rather than preaching. For unjust structures and laws, we need to advocate harder for this—everyone in the Church has a role to play rather than to simply be audiences of the word. We need to pray that the Holy Spirit fires people in our Church up rather than just come along to Sunday Mass and going about doing the status quo. Each of us needs to change.

God is asking the Church of Australia to undertake a Lenten journey (what I mean is an intended time of sacrifice and reflection) with the intention of making a large cultural change to reduce waste and pollution. God is calling us to epic change and to an ecological conversion. We hear the needs of the people more easily than we hear the needs of the environment. We need to care for the earth, the air, the water, and the food we eat. We are at risk of not having a Church if we are not living. In the context of Australia, God is asking us to engage the wisdom and knowledge of country from our Aboriginal elders in order to care for our common home. We need to go on mission throughout our great land to clean our environment and care for its creatures. Our parishes and organisations need to invest in renewable energy sources (and we can't tolerate anything less than this). We need to adopt a culture of zero waste. To do this, we can use the wisdom of the men and women in our parishes who have grown up knowing how to use everything and live without the luxury of plastic. Our leaders need to engage in dialogue with the governments to make this change. We need to teach people that in every decision that they make, they are consciously making a decision that impacts the environment. Whether that includes buying clothes that are from fair trade sources or building and entire house. We are going to have to make sacrifices. This change will not be easy, it will be the most challenging crisis that our religion has faced. This is God's creation. Through the words of *Laudato Si'*, God has called us to change our throwaway culture. Jesus wasn't a throwaway guy. This change will need dedicated young leaders in positions of considerable power that can ensure that all decision making is informed and made ethically with the environment in mind. God calls on young people because they can see a world where the future is impacted by these everyday decisions. We see a world where the Church is empty because it is sick from the pollution outside. A world where it is too hot and the weather is too harsh to go into the world and we are confined indoors. We see a world with not enough clean water, with the poor and marginalised already facing this challenge. We see a world where food cannot be grown due to poor soil and not enough bees. We see a world covered in plastics that is choking. When Jesus wanted to change a culture, he went into

the temple and he threw tables over. We need to turn our tables over and start again. Our attitude needs to be turned over completely.

To look courageously at current structures in the Church especially in regard to what we are asking of a Eucharistic ministry. I do not think a male, celibate priesthood is a structure that continues to be universally and compulsory construct. Additionally, I believe we need a much more authentic synodal structure of leadership which recognizes the gifts of women and men. Power in the Church must be shared by more than consecrated bishops.

First, I think that we need to get in touch with what is at the heart of our being, individually and collectively. Then I think that we need to be clear what we understand as God's creative dream for our world, its values of love, compassion and justice, and how these need to be operationalised in these times. We need to speak from a deep relationship with the incomprehensible God of mystery who is so near to us.

God is asking us to listen to all baptised, Catholics or other traditions, practicing or not. 2020/2021 Plenary Co. ought have a majority of Lay Catholics with a deliberative vote in all matters. Third Rite of Reconciliation and priestly Ordination of married men, especially for communities that do not have Sunday Eucharist each Sunday.

Catholic Church should repent their sins of allowing widespread abuse of children. God would say shame on those weak willed administrators and executives that allowed this to happen and enabled it to continue through movement of molesters. God would say shame on the Church for not actively finding victims, for refusing to meet with victims ([-]), for making a damaged life more difficult by denying efficient justice, for adopting crisis management advice to actively ignore victims—and providing correspondence late on a Friday afternoon with a hope victims will lose their courage to continue.

God is asking of us to go back to the early Church when married people were priests, bishops and popes. God's plan for human beings is for them to normally to have partners (see Genesis). While celibacy was not the cause of the child abuse in the Church, it helped to create an environment where men were alone and did not have women around to balance them or confront them. Celibacy is wonderful when freely chosen, even if for a time.

The Royal Commission identified "clericalism" as the ground out of which the abuse of children was allowed to grow and to be covered up. At the root of clericalism is the belief that ordination changes the man ontologically. As a child I learnt that it was in baptism that I "died and rose with Christ" as a new being. Priesthood and Marriage were the social sacraments: priesthood directed at building up the community of the Church and marriage directed at building up the bond between husband and wife as the basis of building up the family. Somewhere between 1940 and now it has moved to that in ordination the man is ontologically changed into Christ. What does that say about baptism? And what does that say about priesthood? It says that the priest is very special, that he is more like Christ than other people. It is a very easy step to then say a priest should never be questioned by mere lay people, that he deserves special reverence, and that he is not like the rest of men with regard to sexual desires.

To help the nation find its compassionate soul again and to start this by leading truth-telling process regarding our historical and current relationship with the 1st nation peoples.

To leave aside all claim to privilege and become a simple, serving witness to Christ.

To be more open and responsive to the differing ways that the Spirit is working through the many and varied Catholic people, schools, and agencies, as well as in arenas that are not 'Church' or 'parish'.

This question was posed by facilitator Ms [-]: Question 3: Who can you/your community encourage to join in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter to ensure their story contributes to shaping the future of the Church in Australia? If and how were the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities engaged in your Townsville visit? We wish to learn from these experiences. With thanks. [-]

To become relevant and inviting to those who have already left our Church and to members of our secular society by:

- Updating (or discarding) doctrines that are not reflecting Vatican II Statements, or the true message of Jesus,(or are no longer relevant) e.g. change the theology and ritual of baptism in line with statements in Gaudium et Spes 22 "Grace is active invisibly in all people of good will" and "God does not deny the means of salvation to any person of good will".

- ASAP revise our Liturgical language to simple, everyday English that helps all of us, clergy included, to understand what Eucharist and sacraments are meant to convey.

-In line with Pope Francis' (and Jesus') pastoral approach, revise official attitudes/rules re: divorce, remarriage, and reception of Holy Communion; and to those who do not fit neatly into the male/female categories, wherever they may sit on the sexuality spectrum

- That Church teaching acknowledge clearly and loudly that "EVERYONE is 'born of the Spirit' and is truly a beloved son or daughter of God from our very moment of conception / that this 'belovedness' by God exists for always /we can only 'lose it ourselves' by DELIBERATELY rejecting God, or Goodness (thus creating our own 'hell').

- That we gradually avoid proclaiming Mary as 'ever-virgin', based on the findings of Scripture scholars re: the real brothers and sisters of Jesus.

* Attention to respectful music ministry.

* Attention to respectful participation in lay ministry.

* Greater emphasis on preparation and support for married couples for the sacrament of marriage.

Thanks for organizing the meetings. We will have to go back before the Tridentine council in 1562 AD and abolish the celibacy requirement for the Latin Catholic Church (the Orthodox Catholic Church does not have it for priests, only for bishops). Realize why the celibacy requirement was introduced! In our part of the parish alone we have three men who left the priesthood because of the celibacy. They could teach us a much better understanding of Christ's teaching in the gospels than the Nigerian priest we have (and who is personally very nice). We also have to involve more

women into important positions, like deacons and advisers for bishops. In Germany, there are female theologians as official leaders of a parish. If it is possible in Europe, it should be possible in Australia. Peace be with you. Shalom, [-].

Maybe God isn't asking, maybe God is saying "Many of you have realised you don't need the Church, you need Me, but you can find Me elsewhere" I can't tell you what God is asking of our Church and I think the question is poorly chosen. I can only tell you what I am asking. I am one of many heartbroken and disenfranchised Catholics, who is just so tired of being disappointed. We want an honest, less hypocritical Church, a place where women are valued for more than their ability to serve, a place that is relevant to our children, that really gives voice to its members, not a Church that offers members an invitation to speak and be heard on the one hand, and then to be told that only the bishops will vote on matters arising from the Plenary Council because it is Church Law. Give us a real voice. Don't treat us like sheep. I don't know what God wants, but I want a Church that is not so utterly and transparently self-protective that it places the institution above the soul. From my personal experience as being Catholic over 50 years, I have absolutely no faith that any comment I make will be read let alone truly heard or considered.

To be an authentic Roman Catholic Church founded by Christ. Not the face of Anglo-Saxon culture with its elements of arrogance, individualism and afraid of the unknown: short of humility of its white supremacy attitude, awkward and incomplete hospitality and slow to rebuke respectfully. Why many migrant Catholics blindly fascinated to join the Pentecostals and other "born again" denominations. Humility to welcome practices and traditions brought in by migrants especially from old Catholic countries, lost in the Australian Churches or have not been practiced at all i.e. dressing up and modestly in Church activities esp. the Mass. Collaborative ministries and plurality of ministers not monopolised by Aussie oldies. Younger ones have to be given the chance to practice their gifts. Volunteer ministers must serve only after three years of service, when they reach 70-75 and when physical and memory fail, to take a more contemplative / prayer ministry. Go back to the old tradition that congregation must arrive 15 minutes before the Mass for the choir to lead the singing also to reduce late comers who must take the side aisles not the middle aisle. More welcoming of hybrid newcomers, not necessarily new migrants and of their inputs. Hospitality extends in opening homes the way we open our hearts. That we are one Family in the Kingdom of God i.e. The element in the Aussie person that when invited i.e. Birthday party, prayer gathering "Padasal", it is not considered an honour with the excuse of doing washings busy etc. Absence of "Transport Ministry" and lack of initiative by those to see to it that their vehicle is not empty when going to Church. Authentic Hospitality during Feasts or morning cuppa excludes the donation box. Fund-raising must be prior to the Feast i.e. I shifted to [-] last year, disappointing that the CC Feast was so watered down with multicultural celebration and with a donation box in the food area. Anything goes that rebuking what is wrong is put under the carpet, get away with it, evading addressing conflicts head-on. That "it is not your business" even i.e. A Communion Minister is committing an immodest act; would be priests and students of BS Theology must have Work Experience in Asia, Africa or South America. Subjects in the Seminary must include Spiritual Theology and Psychology. The gift of counsel must be developed in comforting the afflicted through the Scriptures, not offering quick-fix solutions. SUGGESTIONS: LOVE to be practiced with continuous discussion formally or informally. In the Phils, we addressed each other as Bro or Sis

esp. if we belong to a prayer / religious group, movement and among Church members inside and outside. Respect for elders and the English language must go back to addressing elderlies by a Title. A Booklet to be made available to parishioners on Social Graces inside the Church. Flyers at OL of Victories, Flyers on hospitality citing example.

To reach out to the wider community with the message of the gospel. The Church and, in particular, the hierarchy is seen as totally out of touch with the real world. Hypocrisy on sexual matters overrides a message seen as coming from a wealthy upper class hierarchy. The shortage of appropriate ordained priests further isolates the Church from the community. Priests helicoptered in from overseas are having a serious detrimental effect on connection to community both inside and outside the Church.

To become a Church of humility and service that is outward-looking to the communities in which they exist. We need to reclaim our missionary focus and go out of our comfort zones to meet people where they are—the poor, the unchurched, those injured by the Church, those who hate the Church... We have become an inward-looking Church and we are called to look outwards to those in need, to those on the peripheries, to those who need God most. We need to be the face and hands of Jesus in those places that perhaps we would prefer not to go. To find ways to embrace and include all people while staying true to the Gospel and Tradition. I believe a large factor in people turning away from the Church is because they do not understand the reasons why the Church takes a particular stance on issues whether it be contraception, gay marriage, euthanasia, etc. There exists a huge lack of catechesis coupled with the reluctance of priests to speak about these things (with kindness and charity) in homilies. We need to let all people know that they are welcome in the Catholic Church whilst at the same time making the beauty and wisdom of Catholic Church teachings clear and accessible. To become a Church of repentance. I believe God is calling the Australian Church to an ecclesial examination of conscience to recover our credibility and find ways of healing and renewal in light of the findings of the Royal Commission. The Australian Catholic Church must find public ways to atone for the sins and failings of the past and ways to meaningfully compensate the victims of abuse.

To restore Christianity as a respectable belief. To demonstrate to others how good Christians/Catholics should lead as lives. To respect the requirements of God's Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. To make the celebration of the Eucharist the centre of our Catholic practice. To restore the dignity of discipline with a view to attracting a better class of religious. To bring families back into Catholic practice. To reach out to Catholic school children by 'at school' Catholic traditions e.g. a weekly school Mass.

Nuns have disappeared. They're our Church's bulwark. Evil has increased. Now secular woman dress code is tight, seductive, revealing and very scant. The nuns are dwindling and now so are the priests. The nuns were our Church's safety net circling the Church. Now crime is out of control. We need nuns / sisters head covering on again especially at the holy Eucharist. From [-]

I think God is asking Catholics to educate themselves about their Faith and to fearlessly proclaim it without fear of repercussions. The Catholic Church has been on the defensive with recent issues such as the Sexual Abuse Crisis and the Marriage Vote coming to mind. Clergy have been much too willing to compromise on their faith in important public debates and the laity have been left

confused. Bishops are supposed to be our Shepherds, keeping their flock faithful and defending the Catholic Faith publicly. During the marriage vote, despite the bishops' opportunity to address the Catholic faithful on national television, not a single bishop mentioned that it is Catholic doctrine that marriage is between a man and a woman. A simple declaration of basic Catholic teaching would have made it clear to all Catholics in the country that voting "yes" would be a vote for heresy to be enshrined in law. Not only did the clergy fail to proclaim the faith, some clergy even implied that it was permissible and even laudable to vote "yes".

Catholic schools are currently one of the few opportunities for the Church to connect with lapsed and non-Catholic families. While children might be receiving some Catholic formation, there are little opportunities for Catholic formation for the parents, teachers and staff. I believe the Church and the schools are missing a great opportunity to provide formation on a regular basis to adults, not just the children. I have attended nights of recollections, doctrine formation and retreats from Opus Dei and they have been very helpful to my faith. If the schools are not fostering the formation of adults, we are unlikely to get vocations from the schools. In Christ, Dr [-]

To attend immediately and fully to the presence of the First Peoples of this island-continent. The heavenly patrons of this Plenary Council are suggestive of this action.

The Spirit wants us through Jesus to have total abandonment to God. The Spirit gives us individual gifts to live our daily lives whether as children, religious, parents, or politicians, whatever is our lot in life. The Spirit is calling us to come as we are; to love God and our neighbour; and to display God's love and Jesus mercy in our daily lives through our actions, words and prayers. The Spirit knows living our daily lives is not easy; it has its challenges; and we need help. The Spirit provides help in giving us the graces necessary to trust in and surrender to Jesus and thus progress in our journey towards total abandonment to God. Finally, this abandonment will amongst other things deliver peace and hope to us; two gifts of the Spirit the individual and the world in general are desperately in need of today.

Ordain to the priesthood married men who have deep faith, proven virtue and are natural leaders in their communities. These would include those ex-priests who have married and wish to return to ministry.

Deepening our holiness by Mass and sacraments. Courage to be Catholic in our daily lives. The will to put our beliefs into action.

Our call as laity is fidelity to the teaching of Jesus Christ, in the light of the magisterium and fully living our Catholic vocation by example and openness to others. It is evident that many baptised Catholics have ceased to renew their faith in practice and it is a constant scar on our faith to see heresy preached as new insight and lukewarmness validated in some sort of false tolerance. The disunity and weakness has led to great sin amongst the clergy and the people that they should be leading and it must stop. We need Saints to renew the life of the Church in fact not just in word. That is the call—to sanctity that resonates in a world sick with self-indulgence.

Renew the Catholic and Christian Churches in Australia.

I believe we are being asked to become more active in social justice / refugees and to help stop domestic violence.

I have read a lot of Pope Francis' ideas to desist from the clericalism of our Church and devolve ideas through the members of the Church. I have been a practising Catholic woman all of my life, an educator in Catholic schools for 31 years—a principal for 20 years. The priest is a member of the body politic—an important member—but I have grave fears regarding their influence and/or power which has often been used at the expense of others. A serving ministry in all respects is what I want to see.

God is asking us to live as Christians, to be relevant to society, to be proud to say we are Christians and to be welcoming of all people.

Prohibit same sex relationships within the Catholic Church. It should be strictly prohibited. This is also applicable to the Catholic and other Christian education systems. Persuade the government to prohibit discussions about same sex relationships, gender fluidity, and other LGBTIQ issues within any education systems in the country. Let kids be kids. Inform people to wear appropriately when they come to Mass. It is not a party that we are attending to rather a holy affair between us and God. Eradicate the error of receiving holy communion in the hand. Let the people receive the holy communion on the tongue. The priest should be able to talk about any pressing issues that harm the faith in public and not be bound by political correctness. What is wrong is wrong and we must be able to talk about it. That is called freedom of speech. As per the Pre-Vatican II practises we should not have girls as altar servers. We also should not have the lay community involved in giving the holy communion. We must by all means emphasise the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed sacrament. If possible re-establish the dying practice of women wearing veils to the holy Mass. We should prohibit people who are divorced and remarried, or people who are living in active homosexual relationships, or people who are living together (rather than being married) to receive Holy Communion. People should be educated that the Devil is real and the evil that it spreads is real and it is not just a Myth. Priests and the other religious should not get involved in modernism. They should live by example so that the Lay would have more respect for them. Modernism has its good and evil. Make use of the good and avoid the evil part. For example use the internet to share the message of Jesus Christ. As Catholics we should believe that the Catholic Church was and is the Only True Church founded by Jesus Christ. Make the traditional Latin Mass available in more Churches across the country. There should be more priests trained in exorcism. More importantly traditional Catholic practices should be reintroduced to the Church. There was nothing wrong with them in the past and will be nothing wrong now.

1. That the laity who build and maintain the parishes and who are the lifeblood of the Church in Australia are part of the conversation when decisions are made that affect how parishes are run and the day to day life of the parish. It is time for decisions that are made that affect the structure and direction of parishes to be open. There needs to be an end to making decisions behind closed doors. Let in the light 2. It is not right to ask parishioners who provide the buildings and resources to celebrate the Eucharist to pay for Mass intentions. Jesus did not require payment for His sacrifice so why do the clergy think they can profit from His suffering.

God is asking us to listen to him—an authentic, humble listening, where we put aside our prejudices and politics and be open to what the Holy Spirit is telling us as individuals and a community. God is asking us to listen to each other respectfully and then approach God with humility, asking him to help us hear his voice in the discussions, in our prayer and then be able to make courageous decisions based on genuine needs within the community. To do this, the Plenary Council would be well-placed to follow the Examen prayer of St Ignatius prior to considering anything else: • Where is God present in our community right now? • What are we grateful for? • What opportunities do we have before us? Which ones have we missed in our recent past? • What are our failings? Could we request God’s forgiveness and reconciliation, as well as that of the broader community? • What are we now called to be, and how do we become this? God is asking us to repent and believe the Gospel (Mk 1:15)—to be converted, to have a heartfelt experience of His love for us. The sins of the Catholic Church in Australia—both individually and collectively—have been exposed to the Australian community in past decades and we have expressed sorrow with our words and have begun to show it by our actions. God is now asking us to be converted to Him in the heart and take this opportunity which the Council brings to be reconciled to God and to our fellow Australians whom we have hurt and who have hurt us. The Plenary Council is an opportunity for all to embrace the universal call to holiness, so urgently insisted upon by the Second Vatican Council. God is asking the Church in Australia to “Go out and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). All of the popes since Paul VI have called on Christians to evangelise as the core mission of the Church. Our community could learn from the younger, vibrant Churches in Australia who are reaching the younger generations with the Gospel message. We are a sacramental community, and have a variety of devotions, study/prayer groups, social justice works and other activities to keep converts engaged after their initial fervour wanes and they are tested in their faith. We need to examine the communities within the Church which are growing, (such as the Missionaries of God’s Love, and the Oratorians), and find out what they are doing which is working. Emphasis on prayer and individual spiritual direction/companionship by a trained director (including lay directors) seems to be the common thread. We are blessed with a broad range of spiritualities and liturgical expressions—such as Franciscan, Carmelite, Ignatian, Benedictine, traditional Extraordinary Form liturgy, Charismatic communities—which have a lot to contribute to the lives of lay people, religious and clergy. Re-engagement with Jesus through heartfelt prayer in a variety of manifestations should be the priority of the Church in Australia.

Dismantle the clericalist Church. Admit women to full participation in ministry. Celebrate liturgy in the words of ICEL. Relegate past definitions of dogma to the museum. Value and serve the world as we find it. Speak out and act against injustice. Exclude no one. Judge no one. Join together with other Christians around the communion table.

God is asking us to show love and compassion for all of God's people. Many Catholics individually and part of Catholic organisations (schools, St Vincent de Paul) have been sensational at this. They have opened their hearts to all and have been driven by Christ's message. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church hierarchy and much of the clergy have not. God is calling our Church to return to Christ's original message of love and to scrap the man-made and hierarchical laws which have been built up over the past 2000 years. We have lost our way and God is calling us back. The

<p>original faith had female leaders of house Churches and married priests until the Middle Ages. We learn this at every theological course and yet we continue to ignore this as a Church. After 31 years working in Catholic education including many years as a Principal, I have lost my faith in the hierarchical Catholic Church, but never my faith in God. We talk God's love, but then make women and LBGTIQ people second class members of our faith. This is not God's message of love, but the false message of privileged men focussed through societal norms. God is calling us back to the future. The Catholic Church's basic message is good, and so many lay people and many clergy are doing great things, but the hierarchical Church is lost. We have chosen the protecting the magisterium of the Church over Jesus' message and love for our fellow humans.</p>
<p>Basically to reform the Catholic Church. However it is unwise to ever presume we know what God wants.</p>
<p>Our numbers are diminishing. We need to improve our image to the whole world.</p>
<p>Stop putting aside Catholic traditions, also Our Lady and the holy rosary in name of ecumenism. Teach sacredness of marriage and family in Church and schools, teach youth value of holy purity in our state of life and self-control but show love to all people.</p>
<p>I think the Holy Spirit is suggesting that the third rite of Reconciliation should be reintroduced. Group Reconciliation is more meaningful as sin is usually committed against community.</p>
<p>Return to the traditional teachings of the Church. Encourage better Catechism and adult education. Support more outward displays of faith (processions and such). Focus less on the opinion of the secular world and focus more on supporting the interior foundation of the Church. More encouragement and support for the Extraordinary liturgy and other traditional forms of worship and devotion.</p>
<p>To pause and reflect and pursue justice. In 1992, I travelled to El Salvador and Guatemala. I saw where Oscar Romero and the Jesuits were shot. I saw Nobel prize winner Rigoberta Menchu gather her oppressed people in a holy procession. They defended the poor. This is different to what we do in the Australian Church in my opinion. I am as complicit as anyone.</p>
<p>Hold on to all the traditions of the early Church until Jesus returns. Hold on against all the new challenges and things technology and politics are throwing at Christians now. It is a test and the more the Church is tested the more she needs to be faithful to the original plan. The Church does not need to experiment like other denominations are doing.</p>
<p>I believe God is calling us to remain faithful to the Commandments given to us in the Old Testament, and to faithfully engage with other brothers and sisters of different Faiths, so that we become one united body under Christ as Head of the Universal Church, and then as one United body, able to go out in service to the marginalised, poor and those with no belief at all, so that all people may have the chance to enter into eternal life with God forever in heaven.</p>
<p>I think God is asking of us to let go of the restraints of 'traditions' which are held onto by leaders in the Church, and to live in unity with a 21st century view. Gender, race, marital status should not be an issue as long as you feel a spiritual connection with the Church and want to follow in the</p>

footsteps of Jesus. Jesus was a healer, he looked for the marginal people in the community, that is what God would be asking of us today.

- Be more inclusive.
- Be less judgmental.
- Be holy (in the true sense of the word "whole"—connected with God).
- Be relevant to our modern society.
- Be less hierarchical as an institution.
- Be a voice for the poor and marginalised.

I believe God is asking us to open our hearts and minds to all possibilities and to all people, regardless of race, gender, age, level of ability or sexuality.

People who are willing to share our beautiful Catholic faith. I was protestant for 40 years (from birth), until God called me to become Catholic. Until I was in RCIA, NO-ONE ever told me anything about Catholic beliefs or teachings. It is grossly unfair, selfish and un-Christian for Catholics to "keep it to ourselves". I attend faith-building seminars, workshops etc. at our Church, and the feedback (when I stand up to make a final comment) is—at every single event, without exception—"you share your faith without embarrassment or holding back. I want what you have. You inspire me to do the same. You know so much" What I know is what I learnt in RCIA from the Catechism (the best thing the priest recommended to me while in RCIA). I read it cover to cover. We need to encourage Catholics to share our faith—our face may be the only face of Jesus a person will ever get to see. We have no right to keep it to ourselves, it's about God, not us. I believe God wants us to share our love for Him, know WHAT we Catholics believe and why, but above all, simply to emanate that love He has for us to others around us. We live in such a hurting world of pain, suffering and disillusionment. We need to share the joy of our faith - not keep it inside (not that I ever could, I'm like what Jesus said "If these keep silent the stones would cry out". I couldn't keep Him in if I tried. We're letting Him down by keeping silent. It's time for Catholics, on a lay level, to speak up, be proud of who we are and what we have—and by that love we have for Him, it will attract others. The greatest thing anyone ever said to me was at an Alpha course meeting recently, and someone said (about the person next to me) "I want what she has. And [-] too!" The person next to her said the same thing, another said it to me last week. By our love and by our joy, people are attracted. They know we have something, and they will want it. Who can resist Jesus in all His glory (some may manage it for a while, but in the end, no-one can remain the same after an encounter with Him). Jesus said to St Teresa of Avila(?) "I have no hands on earth but yours ..." If every Catholic said this prayer, and MEANT IT, we would set the world on fire. Jesus did it with just 12 men, one of whom betrayed Him. 2000 years later, we're passing on the torch. We need to uphold our responsibility to Him in that regard—not "hide it under a bushel" (as scripture says).

Adult faith education, including bringing back Catechisms into our Churches and homes. A voice—we Catholics need to speak up about what we believe in. I also believe that we need easier access to qualified exorcist priests—and for individual parish priests to be required to refer people to an

exorcist/person properly qualified in the area of discernment. Someone I know was told (literally) to "forget this nonsense" when they approached a priest for help. The Late Fr Gregory Jordan agreed, when told this story, that it was like telling someone with cancer to put a band aid on it and pretend it wasn't there, then it would go away. People in Australia are turning (in droves) to atheism and other forms of spirituality. We need "pest control" to deal with the downside of that if/when it arises, and properly educated priests who follow our Pope, our Bible, the prophets, the Apostles, and Jesus—all of whom believe in evil spirits. They haven't disappeared and the Catholic Church is the most fully qualified Church with the highest level of authority to deal with a growing problem that secular society now seems to believe in even more than our priests do.

I think that God is asking us to return to Gospel values and to spread the Good News in every aspect of our lives. I think that that entails issues of inclusivity, evangelisation, structural change and the development of new roles. I think we are being challenged to strip away the extras that we have added to what Jesus taught us. We need to return to that vision and lose a lot of the princely and worldly structures that we have imposed allegedly for the sake of order. There is a need for a revision of hierarchical structures and roles and expectations. We need to become a humble and contrite Church which is walking in the footsteps of our founder Jesus and break away from the artificial constructs we have imposed. The relationships between different groups within the Church need to be challenged and ministry needs to focus more on service and less on presidential mores. The nature of priesthood thus needs to be revisited and become much more oriented to service of the people and less on demanding obedience and compliance to rules and regulations. There needs to be more outreach and less navel gazing directed at ourselves. In practice we need to celebrate more of the good things that have occurred within the Church; things like feast days. The need for appropriate education for all of the faithful is critical. That means providing suitable venues for such education and for things like retreat experiences that are more generally available and not just for the few. To make such things available we need to find ways in which we can make them affordable for more people. Maybe more places/ parishes need to explore the possibility of Missions at home.

We need to publish facts about rogue priests. If there are 6000 rogue priests which is one in 200,000, then 199,999 are not. So we need to get people to focus on the 199,999 and not the 1.

If we say the Church is 'A Place to Call Home' we must:

- * Recognise and accept LGBTI people as full members of the Church.
- * Divorced and remarried people must be included in full communion. Jesus gave himself to all at the Eucharist not just those who are supposedly 'good'.
- * The bishops need to speak out more stridently for refugees here and those detained off shore. Frank Brennan is doing his best but we need to hear more voices from the hierarchy loud and clear.
- * Women must be accepted in all levels of ministry and authority in the Church. Many people reject the Church because it is so patriarchal.
- * Leadership needs to go back to the Gospel and learn from Jesus how to lead. They need to get rid of the power game, be simple, dress down and be open to all in love.

* Follow the lead of Pope Francis who is trying so hard to change the culture against much opposition from those who don't want to lose their power.

*The homily is the only time many people receive the meaning of the Word of God. To just repeat the Gospel reading in other words is not much help. It is also not much help to give the traditional understanding of the readings. A more cosmic approach must be taken—all is one. I love it when I listen to a really inspirational homily that is well researched and that speaks to the everyday lives, needs and understanding of the people. Jesus met the people where they were. At Mass a couple of weeks ago the priest gave a brilliant homily, short, to the point and meaningful for the people. It was so good the people clapped him when finished. They did not mind the fact that his English was not perfect. Wonderful! Thank you for hearing me out. I would love a relevant Church for the 21st century that young people wanted to be part of. So many never come to celebrate the Eucharist again after they leave school. Sadly it has no meaning for them.

Be the Good Samaritans for the people who are homeless. PLENARY Council Meeting at the [-] Church [-] Qld. Sunday 21st October 2018. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? For the Church to be the GOOD SAMARITANS FOR THE HOMELESS. “I was hungry and you feed me, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited me,...” REFLECT What have I experienced in Listening to the Spirit? Towards the end of Mass on Sunday 7th October, [-] spoke to all re: the Plenary Council 2020—Listen to what the Spirit is saying. As I listened to [-] speaking and was tuning into what the Spirit was saying, I became aware of the call for the Church to be The Good Samaritans for the Homeless. Jesus said clearly, “I was hungry and you feed me, naked and ...” After Mass, we came home and watched Songs of Praise on Channel 2. The theme of the service at the [-] Church [-] was Homelessness. [-] Church is an Anglican Evangelical Church in central London, UK. The Church members were seriously involved in caring for the homeless. On the following Sunday, 14th October, we again watched Songs of Praise after Mass. This time the theme was the enduring story of St John’s Ambulance which was formed in 1887 but goes back even further to the 11th Century, where the Knights of St John set up a hospital to care for sick pilgrims. Our personal response: Relying upon prayer and upon the presence of the Holy Spirit we could respond in obedience to the divine command. The role of the Church to serve in the world is primarily to mediate the presence of God in Christ—active in mercy and love—powerful and effective through the Holy Spirit. [-] and [-]

To engage with the youth and those who have been affected in any way with Child Sexual Abuse positively, otherwise many of the Church communities will close as those older members pass away.

1. I'm concerned about the young. I mentioned this at a recent parish Plenary Council session. As an older retired person, I remember my youth experience with the Catholic Youth Organisation in Sydney. It was there we young men and women attended Benediction before our Sunday evening Dances. We had a relationship with our parish priest. We played football and netball (basketball) against other parishes' CYO groups ... We attended Mass. Our friends were all of like mind. I married my beautiful wife from within our parish C.Y.O. as did many others. I am unaware of any other like organisation today. I am familiar with the National Evangelisation Teams (an offshoot of

Emmanuel Community of which my wife and I and our children—now adults themselves—were long time members). This is one very effective group involved with young men and women. My wife and I have been active in parish life for many years and I was a long-time member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. We credit the CYO and Emmanuel Community as the inspirations for our love of our faith and God. We need more of these types of outreach to show our young people "a better way of living".

To be in relationship with Jesus, to live the good news of this relationship, to share the good news in relationship. For our life to be scented by our desire for and time with the Shepherd and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. To be presenting a choice of life to the world (life lived to the full) not a defence of an intellectual position. God is invested in relationship with all of humanity; be people that know God is invested; protect and fight for relationship with God; protect and fight for any relationship that God has brought together and parallels this investment. Let communities spring from these investments and let the communities protect for these relationships. This dynamic is built into our being.

Better Evangelisation including: Outreach to non-Catholics. Promote good speakers. Look at what is happening that is already good such as Multi-Cultural events, parish Mission, Retreats. Promote good speakers. Promote Eucharistic Devotion, Holy Hours. Encourage Laity to join a political party to make a difference. Teach the basics. Don't try to change things that have already been ruled out. Challenge young people by encouraging fasting, devotions etc. Use the Internet. Promote good Apps for devices. Better marriage preparation. Better formation of priests. Too many more to list.

To ensure that our Catholic Church listens and responds with openness, compassion and willingness to be more that which is claimed it is—"A Place to call Home" where " All are welcome" and all are invited to "Come as you are"! No-one should feel alienated because of age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, marital status.

The last five years of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse have been a body blow to the Catholic community in Australia. The litany of personal and systemic failures of our leaders to protect the young and vulnerable from the predation of paedophiles has been stunning and overwhelming. We have arrived at a point in our history where we experience shame and confusion. Our Church and its leaders have lost credibility and moral authority. Many Catholics no longer trust these leaders to take the path to truth and to undertake the reforms that are needed to allow the Gospel to be our central message to the world. Therefore, as members of the People of God, we reclaim our Church and require that, as a community, we recognise the measures that will have to be taken to ask forgiveness, make reparation and repair the damage to the Body of Christ. The Spirit is reminding us that the Church belongs to all the baptized who form the community of believers in Jesus—Christ's faithful (Canon 204 §1). Therefore, although Canon Law privileges the ordained and describes the laity in negative terms as those who are not ordained (Canon 207 §1), in fact, all the baptized are equal in dignity and importance, and are to be accorded their equal place within the structures and decision-making of Church organization. Every baptized person has been blessed by this Spirit with a giftedness— charism to be discerned faithfully, developed and used in the service of the community (1 Cor 12:4-11). Following upon this basic truth, we are being led to advocate for

several discrete actions that we sincerely believe must be undertaken to reveal the real face of the whole Body of Christ. 1. Acknowledge and address the running sore of sexual abuse within our Church. 2. Recognise and deal with the problem of clericalism. 3. Overhaul Church decision-making. 4. Address the lack of professionalism and accountability evident in many clergy. 5. Engage in parish revitalization. 6. Attend to the revitalisation of sacramental liturgy. 7. Be both creative and bold in discerning Church leaders and pastors. 8. Restore women to their rightful place within the Catholic community. 9. Reclaim our role as a servant Church. 10. Take adult theological and faith education seriously. 11. Engage with the future of the Church. We are at a crisis point. The Spirit is using this crisis to lead us to a new way of being as Church. Now, more than ever, we require clear-sighted, determined, Spirit-inspired leadership from our bishops to revitalise our Church and to place the whole People of God in their rightful place as equal partners in the mission of the baptised, equal participants in the life and ordering of the community, and equal bearers of the gifts of the Spirit in Christ's Church. The process may be painful but there is no going back. (Each of the eleven points is expanded in the supplementary material attached to this submission.)

Develop a family ritual to celebrate the Pasch as outlined in Chapter 4 of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's book "Journey Towards Easter" (See additional material at the end of submission).

To bring the Church into line with true interpretation of scripture with regard to the Ordination of women.

To step up and be bold, Jesus paid the price for the meek, now the Church must be as brave as Saul. Paul was not chosen to be a shrinking violet, and nor should the future of the Church in Australia,

God can only ask us to follow the clear instructions laid out in his 10 commandments and by the example of his son Jesus Christ who he send here to instruct us and to save our souls. If prelates are interested in this question it is that they should do their job and defend the tenets of the Church, teach Catholic Dogma and offer the sacramentals. The changes in the Church since Vatican II, have paralleled a dive in the numbers of practicing Catholics. The new Catholicism has lost its sincerity and spirituality. I think we all crave a spiritual life and if we cannot find it in a prayerful Mass, then we will keep searching for it elsewhere until we satisfy this deep need humans have to experience God. I experienced a Latin Mass recently for the first time and the impact of having the Altar Boys and priests facing the altar and not the congregation has not left me. The idea that we were all praying to God and not being lectured or addressed was distinct. That for me was a spiritual opportunity, my time to adore God, His Son and the Holy Spirit.

I believe God is asking the same things He has always asked—we are simply coming to the conclusion that we must view these things in a different light. Loving thy neighbour and giving kindness to those stricken with misfortune remains the same teaching lives must be aligned by—I believe God would ask us to reconsider polarising and exclusionary beliefs and practices to understand why we engage in them, and whether we believe that our free will is best exercised focusing on these practices rather than on ministry and justice.

To develop and institute realistic goals and strategies to provide better equity here in our world. Furthermore to encourage and support leaders in our community as well as those in positions of power to adopt a fair, just and peaceful approach when dealing with others, both locally and internationally.

I think God is asking that we update/modernise our faith to encourage younger people to become Christians and to encourage more men to become priests. There is a reluctance to change—particularly older generations—because they are afraid of what they don't know. They think they will lose tradition ... they won't ... change is a wonderful thing. Nothing is forever and this may apply to the Church.... change is always good. Youth groups ... why is it every denomination has youth groups except Catholic ... I live in [-] and there certainly aren't any here. My children have always asked to go to youth groups who do wonderful wholesome activities building trust, a sense of community and connection. However, they are always other denominations who do run the youth groups. So I let my children go and they have a wonderful time, meeting many, many wonderful children who all love God ... the same God the Catholics worship. Do we not have youth groups because of priests being caught up in child sex scandals. Perhaps if they were allowed to marry, we wouldn't have this problem and we'd be able to have youth groups. Being Christian is more than just praying it's about doing and I am hoping the Catholic Church changes their views on how Christianity should look. Get with the times. We ...

Submission to the Plenary Council: Clearly, Catholics should be as one in faith, but sadly, they are currently divided between so-called “progressives” (or so-called “liberals”) who don't fully accept Church teaching, and those who faithfully stand wholly and completely with the Church. The “progressives” feel free to disagree with the Church on controversial subjects such as birth control, abortion, so-called “gay marriage” and a host of other teachings such as the existence of hell and purgatory, belief in transubstantiation...the list goes on...and on. How do I know? From personal experience—i.e. conversations with fellow Catholics—and more generally, from reading the alarming results of surveys carried out in Australia and overseas. We only have to look at what happened in Ireland, a once staunchly Catholic country: majority support for both gay marriage and abortion! To rectify this corrosive, debilitating situation we need much better catechesis both in our schools—for the benefit of the young—and in our parishes—for the benefit of adults. There is a crying need not only for Catholics to know what the Church teaches but to be given a deeper understanding of all the whys and wherefores. A thorough and proper understanding of Church teaching will give Catholics more confidence in the faith, help revitalise it and thus contribute to greater unity. Too many Catholics have been swayed in their beliefs by a society growing more and more hostile to Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. They aren't hearing enough from the other side—the Church's side. We urgently need, in all Catholic parishes, quality Adult Education in the Faith. As one of the greatest preachers of all time wrote: (Romans 10:13-17) “As the scripture says, ‘Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved’. But how can they call to Him for help if they have not believed? And how can they believe if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed? And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out? ... So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes from preaching Christ.” Note: Adult Education in the Faith is not simply a call for better sermons. These are properly and appropriately connected with the

Bible readings of the day and that is entirely appropriate. Adult Education in the Faith requires formal structures and advance publicity: talks given in a hall (or in the Church building) by well qualified people such as our priests or by well qualified lay people. There would also be audience interaction: i.e. opportunities for questions and discussion. The emphasis would, however, be on upholding Catholic Truth—what it is and why it makes perfect sense. We are supposed to be the Church militant. It's time to stand up for the faith. Sincere regards [-]

We seem to have lost our way and our soul which enables us to live daily the joy of the Gospel. We need to be called to a deeper renewal of faith at all ages and be invited back into a genuine faith community.

The same that God has asked everyone everywhere throughout history, viz., to observe the first and second of all the commandments (as per Mark 12: 28-34). I do not presume to know that God is asking us to do something else at this time. However, if God is concerned about the state of the Catholic Church in Australia, then perhaps the Holy Spirit will work to provide more labourers, as 'the harvest is great, but the labourers are (far too) few.' It seems to me that the only way this can be achieved is by making celibacy optional for all members of the clergy, and by allowing qualified women to perform functions similar to those which are currently the exclusive domain of male priests. Further, the Mass could be improved by the following measures: 1. Reform the liturgy of the Word by using a superior translation to the Jerusalem Bible (using inclusive language, amongst other things). 2. Abandon the last lot of unwieldy changes to the prayers of the Mass (especially the Prefaces and Eucharistic Prayers), and either revert to the previous English prayers or produce new, concise and poetic forms of prayers for the Mass. 3. Recognise that music should be either good, or not used at all during the Mass. This would involve culling many of the of the songs that have been in use since the 1970's; commissioning new music on a regular basis; and not being afraid to revive classic sacred music (competently performed) for use in the Mass. Finally, it is essential to revive the third rite of reconciliation for widespread and general use in our parishes. We must admit that the current forms have been dead for years, and are unlikely to be revived.

God is asking of us in Australia, to have faith, trust and to love him. God knows we are discouraged and hurting, he is aware of how we feel alone and rejected but he is asking us to be still and to feel his presence in all his creations.

I believe that God is asking us to listen carefully to His Holy Spirit in all our reflections and one really important question God is asking us right now is this: "How will you find ways to engage the young people of Australia into a meaningful contact with the Church that my son and your brother, Jesus, initiated? So many who have been baptized into the Catholic faith have either never been truly engaged from the outset or have since fallen away. It is not only the children in primary and high school I am thinking of but also those in tertiary studies and post-school careers. I also have great concern for the young adults—single and married who are now raising their own families. I want them back and I am counting on you to help me to win them back. By your own baptism, you have been sent as disciples of Jesus, so your part is vital. What concrete steps will you take to make this happen? If you and I cannot win the younger people back, my Church, your Church faces an even more difficult future." I believe that God is also asking us this: "Your ordained clergy and religious for the most part are doing a great job in difficult circumstances, but they need you lay people to help them. Ask that my Spirit encourage those at all levels in the

clergy from the Archbishops and bishops to the parish priests to 'let go more' and to 'invite appropriate lay persons in'. I need both male and female lay people to enter into more senior roles in the way my Church is being administered at every level. Some administrative decisions can even be better handled by the laity. Please pray that all the Archbishops, bishops, other clergy and religious will heed my call to a more responsible laity in my Church." In the name of Jesus and through the intercession of his Holy mother, Mary. God's Blessings [-] Parish of [-]

Please make changes NOW, not later. RC Church has lost good people due to mistakes made by clerics. Allow priests and nuns to get married/ Men are not more important than women. Less temptation. Make it more child friendly/ Improve music/ Do not go backward indicating this music is not allowed...etc. Rubbish!!/ Change now.

Canon law needs to be changed that will permit the roles of administering the community to be shared more widely as between laity (male and female) and clergy. It is a case of incorrect and "old chestnuts roasted on the fire" that this sounds like Protestant and Congregational thinking and opposes the Hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church. The fact is that Tradition within the meaning for Catholics is Revelation but revelation much more dependent upon human interpretation than is preached at to laity and indoctrinated to Clergy. It is time to see the truth in protestant and congregational practices while maintaining the goodness of the clerical/laity divide. The principles of Ordination should be about "charism" rather than merely "office". The selection criteria for priestly clerical ordination rely heavily upon spiritual matters and celibate values. Yet 75% (pick a figure) of the priest's time are discerning strictly mundane human issues—allocating budgets; selecting and managing personnel; managing human resources on finite activities such as infrastructure and social service outreach. These in any other organisation are accepted as tasks that are performed daily by lay people all over the world. Especially now that tribal Catholicism has gone and congregations have dwindled, priests are spending more time on these mundane things. Even the liturgical tasks of "match, hatch and despatch" are a big slice of time and yet are low in terms of innovation, education, evangelisation and are repetitive tasks that could be performed by "trained monkeys" if externals were the main criteria (which they are not). We have highly trained, expensively trained, long-time trained priests performing repetitive tasks that do not go to enlarging the community. They are all lumped under banner of "pastoral" but fail to hit the mark "pastorally" in so many ways. Clergy are fearful of being 'too evangelistic' for fear of being called Bible bashers or for fear of losing their audience. The growth of lay staff has been good but it also has created a class of uninformed laity interposed between priest and people. Many parishes have become bureaucracies. Laity do not [have] the training nor the managerial prerogatives to give the help that [is] needed. I have seen examples where lay staff even contradict the views of a pastoral council. Priests keep Finance Councils away from pastoral Councils for purposes of control over money. Accountability and transparency is still minimal and opaque.

I am not really sure that GOD is asking anything of us, but I know that the clergy are asking us for ideas and suggestions to make the Catholic Church in Australia more relevant and for it to have more active parishioners.

We think God is asking us to: Re: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

- Adopt a zero tolerance of sexual abuse in the Church.
- Remain faithful to the Church and our Christian mission—despite the Commission.
- Communicate accurate and balanced information about the Church because the fallout from Royal Commission cast scorn over the innocent as well as the guilty.
- Consider implementing a code of ethics, professional code of conduct—for ordained folks and other Church workers—such as the Qld College of Teachers uses for teachers.
- Engage lay people—particularly women—in any tribunal process in the Archdiocese with regard to safeguarding children etc.
- Be more proactive—especially bishops—in the public sphere about religious matters.
- Prioritise adult faith formation, e.g., Bible studies, then, armed with sound information, we can express our Christian values and beliefs to the wider public and expect our point of view to be listened to and respected.
- Encourage committed Catholics to take up teaching as a way to practice their faith and their mission.
- Encourage teachers in Catholic schools to practice their faith.
- Ordain women to the Diaconate.
- Reintroduce the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation.

We think God is asking us to:

#RE: Scripture knowledge and preaching the Word:

- put a greater emphasis in Sunday homilies on combining life experience (e.g. trials / challenges / successes) with the Word—and showing people how God fulfils his promises towards us;
- engage lay people in greater participation in the life of the parish—particularly with regards to teaching the faith/evangelising—perhaps even preaching on Sunday, applying the scriptures to everyday life and making it real;
- put scripture to work for teaching and heal, e.g., when with a sick person, speaking healing scriptures over their situation (Psalm 107:20, Isaiah 53:5);
- engage with the scriptures more deeply gaining knowledge and wisdom from them—allowing them to form and transform our lives, giving us courage and hope.

#RE: Faith formation

- allow for greater opportunities for faith formation at parish levels;
- put more effort into drawing back those who have fallen away from their faith;
- re-engage the parents of children in our Catholic schools;
- re-focus Religious Education in Catholic schools on having a loving relationship with God;
- reinforce the need for Church membership and practices (lifestyle) by strengthening the faith of believers;

- be open to sharing the riches of other Christian denominations, e.g., the music of the Hillsong community which successfully reaches out to young people.

#RE: The role of the laity

- step up, as lay people, and take responsibility for the Church and the situation we find ourselves in—stop blaming priests and recognise that this is our problem—so let's become part of the solution;
- engage lay people more in the pastoral work of the parishes.

#RE: Media presence

- give the Church a greater presence in the media—advertising, marketing, social media etc.;
- focus on spreading the Good News rather than on controversial social issues.

#RE: Natural Family Planning

- make natural family planning courses free:
 - o for Catholics who choose to adhere to the Church's teachings on contraception
 - o as part of marriage preparation courses, together with information about why the Church teaches against contraception—the benefits etc.
 - o because the Creighton Method cost a fortune to learn

#RE: Women's ordination

- revisit the notion of ordaining women to the priesthood—this has several advantages:
 - o it would help with the priest shortage;
 - o it would allow us to find local priests rather than importing them;
 - o it would make for very different homilies, e.g., women's approach to scripture is sometimes very different from men's (women often focus on the bigger picture);
 - o it would allow the talents of over half the Church population (otherwise neglected) to be used in the service of the community;
 - o it would make practical sense to engage women in this ministry, because they can be gifted at pastoral roles, especially with other women.

Australia must protect her relationship with God and The Trinity and uphold the Ten Commandments. God is asking for a deeper, more meaningful relationship with us and wants us to have Him at the centre of our lives in every thought, action and encounter we have in our daily lives. To pray, extend grace and mercy and to be conscious of the Ten Commandments in every decision and action we take; mindful of how righteous He is and how important it is for our wellbeing to try to emulate our leader and live by His laws so that we may have a spiritually meaningful and wholesome life. God wants us to seek Him. We have difficult questions to answer e.g. the rights for gay marriage but we need the knowledge of The Word to do so. This takes time, dedication, discussion and fellowship with others knowledgeable in The Gospel. God wants us to arm ourselves with The Word so we can defend His laws. God wants us to change our habits and

include education of The Word in our daily lives. A daily dose of prayer and filling of the Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith and make decisions with righteousness and Gods law leading us. We are all weakened and society is leading us astray. God wants us to find our leader—HIM and let Him lead us. We need to be strong in our faith so we can follow. We are seeking spiritual fulfilment in yoga, Buddha, the “special creation forces” out there, mindfulness, incense burning, deep breathing and other ‘new age’ practices. The daily worship and thought of The Trinity is the only way to feel fulfilled and complete and God wants us to talk to Him daily not twice a year at Easter and Christmas.

God is calling the Church to be more than institutional and not simply a community but the ultimate model of all ministry—to be a disciple. The Church that responds to the promptings of the Holy Spirit by having a good self-knowledge with an ability to accept itself as it is and the willingness to be open so it transforms our lives. We must ever realise the Church is always in reform and we are ever on a spiritual journey to a deeper realisation of the ever-continuing presence of the Lord in our lives. We should cultivate a willingness to follow the Spirit wherever he may lead us and this will be what we encourage in those with whom we minister. Most importantly without Christ we can do nothing, but with Christ nothing is impossible. So we must pray and meditate on the Gospels. There are these striking words said at the Vatican Council more than 50 years ago; When the Gospel is proclaimed, Christ again speaks his saving word. Nearly 100 years ago there was a pope called Benedict who said; our one desire for all the children of the Church (all of us) is be saturated with Scripture so we can come to the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our present archbishop wants to be buried with his Bible that he has carried around with himself for many years. So let us all meditate on the Scriptures daily and when we hear his voice we will not harden our hearts!!

1. Contemplative renewal. 2. To live in peace and harmony with fellow Christians, by being truly ecumenical. 3. To adopt a lifestyle of silence and stillness in order to hear what the Spirit is saying. 4. Truth telling and community building. 5. Ensure that people come before politics, that silence is rated over sermons, and the focus is on community rather than committees. 6. To deepen the spirituality of the Church, rather than religiosity, by encouraging congregations to familiarise themselves with the mystics, e.g., John of the Cross, Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, and more modern leaders like Thomas Merton, John Main and Laurence Freeman OSB. John Main wrote: "The social vision of the gospel sees charity, not exploitation, characterizing human relationships, generosity not possessiveness controlling the economy, and freedom not fear shaping the psychological atmosphere".

We first discussed the definition of “us” in the question. We agreed that it was intended to include everyone—Clergy, Laity and perhaps also people outside the Church. Things that we think God is asking of us, specifically “in Australia at this time”. To discuss and reform roles in the Church (Clergy/ Laity, Men/ Women—with a goal of equal opportunity for all who are called to all roles). (Includes Married priests, Female priests and Deacons, optional celibacy, Laity taking on administrative and other roles in parishes so that priests can focus on pastoral work, Laity to have a role in the formation of priests?) To discuss and act upon the reasons for lack of Church attendance/ participation—“the young have turned away from the Church, but not necessarily from the Faith”. (Much discussion about possible reasons, the most significant of which seemed to

be Clericalism and the abuse of power). There is anger among some of the young, not always expressed, about the abuse, which needs to be acknowledged and dealt with. (Not all abuse is Clerical—domestic influence on children also needs to be included). To speak up, speak boldly, and listen with an open heart. To be more inclusive (e.g. LGBTIQ+?). Jesus' urgent hope "That they may be one". To Discuss and act upon Faith education for people of all ages. Develop and run Apologetics courses? To continue the unfinished renewal of Vatican II. The documents on the Laity from Vatican II have not yet been fully accepted, understood or implemented. The involvement of the laity is often to do with 'housekeeping' tasks. There will need to be a revision of regulations concerning what is left only to the ordained before serious attention is seen to be given to the role of the Laity. Can we hope that the outcomes of this Plenary Council will be fully implemented when some/many of Vatican II are still mothballed according to the preference of certain clergy? To reinstate bishop Bill Morris. To listen to and learn from other Churches and religions (and non-religions, e.g. Atheism?) To encourage ecumenical activity. To support parents and families as the primary educators of children. Things that we think God is always asking of us, not specifically "in Australia at this time". To put God first. To live God-centred lives of Love and prayerfulness. To live the Scriptures—follow Christ's example (John 17). A story was told about a young unchurched man who married the daughter of a Catholic couple, and became a Minister of a Christian Church, inspired by the lived example of Faith he saw in his wife's parents. To be people of Faith. To repent (personally and collectively).

To not just listen to the Gospels but to live what Jesus asks us to do. Also to put into practice what Paul admonishes and exhorts. With regard to the appointment of bishops etc. This is rarely seen. In my life I have noted that people of worldly consequence are made much of, widows and orphans are generally not regarded. This is not in keeping with what Jesus taught. His Church looks more like the temple of his day. I love my Church but I tremble for it. Please listen to the words of Jesus.

Without a doubt, God is asking us why our Churches are losing attendees in great numbers every year, why are so few joining ministries i.e. he priesthood, Sisters and why is the Church hierarchy burying its head in the sand?

Not to waste time in 'listening' sessions and to commit to quantifiable and cutting-edge research methods to genuinely gauge the successes and opportunities of the Catholic Church in Aus.

Please, please read the attached material that explains what I can only briefly say here. I think that God is asking us to face facts, to recognise reality, the reality of the gap between the institutional Church in which I grew up and was nurtured and people today, their limited knowledge, understanding and practice of "the faith", even the language of faith. There is need to recognise specific differences in different contexts e.g. people living in city/suburbs and people living in rural and especially remote parts of our country. Evangelisation should be tailored to the context, the specific reality of the people. Our first preoccupation should be to nurture relationship with our God, to make disciples of Jesus, rather than focusing on ritual and structures, to witness (in "word" when necessary and certainly by our action) to the unconditional love of our God and our call to be loving people.

I think God is wanting us to be more inclusive and reach those who may never have considered the Catholic faith before. I think it is imperative that we become a Church that embraces both genders in all levels of the Church, as I believe this will not only help us be more relatable, but help us to stop issues of the past happening again. We need to focus on our social services as these services not only help us do God's work in the community, but also help the community see that we do more than just get together and "pray"—we do good things for our community as a whole.

To treat seriously the concept of baptism in the Holy Spirit, as a means to “setting hearts on fire”, establishing/deepening a Personal Relationship with Jesus...through Alpha Programmes, The Gift of baptism etc. This Pentecostal Experience is essential if we are to witness to a world sunk in mediocrity and despair. I sincerely ask the clergy to investigate, promote, support Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the wonderful spiritual riches to be found therein. [-]

I believe God is asking us to be open and to speak honestly about how His Church can move forward in an effort to be relevant to all in this current time. To this end the following issues need to be addressed: 1. Reinstate the Third Right of Reconciliation. 2. Replace the unpopular English translation of the Mass with one of more user friendly language. 3. Married men should be ordained into the priesthood. 4. Church teaching on contraception should be changed. It is generally being ignored by most Catholics who are listening to their consciences. 5. The official Church's attitude to Gays (the requirement that they remain celibate) is unrealistic. 6. Restricting the reception of Holy Communion for remarried divorcees, non-Catholic spouses, and visitors from other Faiths does not seem to be a very Christian attitude. 7. There needs to be a closer connection between the parish school and the Church. 8. The pompous appearance of senior Church officials who address the congregation while wearing a mitre and holding a crosier is off putting. It does not equate with Pope Francis's suggestion of 'smelling like the sheep'.

To pray for the Catholic Church in Australia.

God is asking how to encourage people to be part of the Church (people of God). This needs to be through many avenues including vibrant liturgy (i.e. good music and quality homilies).

As a people, we need to have more compassion for the Church members who are divorced. To allow contraception because only the couple in a relationship have the understanding of their ability to foster, care for and educate their children and the emotional strength and financial requirements that are needed to achieve these aims. As far as divorce goes, members of the Church who are divorced can no longer be a practising member of the Church. Christ welcomed everyone during his time here on earth. It is only the arrogance of man and their desire to be in control which has caused so many problems in people's lives.

- More youth people involved

- What I think the Church should look: a bigger parish, more engaged and involved, focused on own intentions and praying

- More Youth Groups

- Greater female leadership

- More solid education system for Catholic High schools. Teaching staff influences children's beliefs.
- More modern worship style and music in Mass (even rap)
- More down to earth and relatable homilies (the way it's presented)
- More youth and young adult Masses
- Let people as young as 7 years old help the Church (ring the bells, light the candles, readings and prayers of the faithful, Eucharistic ministers)
- The Church helps the world and keeps the world safe for all eternity
- God wants us to help others out of Church that can't come
- Morals:
 - *not everyone has to agree but everyone should know why the Church teaches its teachings
 - *emphasise "absolute truth"
 - *be clear on Catholic teaching and morals apologetically
- Youth: Draw younger people in to Mass by more participation/music (modern and traditional)
- Architecture: blend traditional and modern
- Worship: more adoration available (many kids have not experienced)
- More youthful and fun songs. This would invigorate the Mass
- Father tells more jokes, makes Church feel more relaxed
- Family
- Kindness
- More female roles and positions (leading/active roles)
- More active roles for the parish
- More engagement from young youth
- Change the lengths of the Mass
- Church is colourful, quiet place, friend
- More Church community events
- More female positions (not necessarily priests, but more positions than just nuns)
- Lively
- Encourage people
- God wants us to make the Church bigger
- God would want us to add more readers
- Love

- More respect to priests
- Science versus religion
- Unashamed of Catholicism
- Trust
- Belief
- With knowledge and confidence empower every Christian to "defend" and talk about their faith
- Foster internal processes to facilitate change
- Larger variety of musical instruments at Mass
- Love
- More family environments
- Activism
- More interaction and involvement of the regular Church attendees in Mass
- Family participation
- More family stuff
- More youth groups, more fun, more learning
- Kindness
- I wish people to help more and stop being lazy as we all need to gather round and help the spirit guide
- Have a strong identity, know what it means to be a Catholic
- Grace
- More youth groups
- Newer more catchy songs
- More youth and young adult meetings
- More youth participation in Mass that's not forced
- Encourage more and better Catholic education in Catholic schools
- Canteens at Church which provide meals for the homeless
- God wants heaven for the Church
- Church is a house
- Women priests
- Family involvement, bring family together
- Community involvement
- Trust

- More fun activities
- More youth groups
- Fun, entertaining, family involvement
- Make more jobs available. Let people get involved
- Informed/encountered scripture
- Accepting or evangelist

- God wants us to have a great day every day and also to forgive our sins
- Christians who are less focused on history and traditional practices and rituals and more on the future
- Church that is unafraid to share thoughts and beliefs with each other
- A lively Church that has fun activities to get more kids, is relevant to the kids in Church, has posters, more engagement and forgives sins
- Make more jobs available. Let people get involved
- More youth groups
- More family stuff
- Bring Church into our family
- Church needs to be as attractive as youth groups
- Family involvement (bring family together, more time, active, love, pray)
- More youth groups (fun, entertaining, family involvement)
- Greater callings for vocations in Australia
- Possible adoption of more current music styles into ministries
- Union of Christian faiths into Catholicism
- A thriving faith that is ever growing in youth
- More communities that are close and grow in faith together
- Removal of priests with sexual assault accusations. Stronger formation process for seminarians
- Missionary priests and religious?
- Prepared for a secular society
- Relevant to the lives of youth
- Modern perspective on scripture
- The Church needs to be the courageous anchor to be relied on. It has been stripped of its former self, and been replaced with a husk. In a sense being a Catholic has been awkward, broken and

confusing. The Church needs to resonate with all people. Bold and steadfast. Smart and beautiful. Stand strong!

- Have kids do the readings
- Opportunities to grow as a community after Mass (social gatherings)
- Activism
- More participation
- Sunday Mass
- *Bring back lost traditions
- *teach youth prayers in Latin
- Grace

The Church in Australia needs more dynamic and inclusive liturgy which reflects Australian culture and language. It does not need to be an identical translation of Latin which does not make sense in English. (I refer here to the disastrous introduction of the current order of the Mass.) It is more important for the language of the liturgy to make sense in Australian English than to reflect a word for word translation from the Latin a language dead for a thousand years. This was a good example of the top down Clerical power structure of the Church which has not worked as evidenced by the results of the Royal Commission. We need women and lay people involved at all levels in the Church with full voting rights.

God is asking us to treat animals better. God is asking us to ensure a better education for the disadvantaged. God is asking us to respond to gun violence. God is asking us to accept the LGBTI community. God is asking us to address the sexual abuse crisis and to not provide retired accused priests with luxuries. God is asking us to allow females to be priests. God is asking us to help the environment.

We are a small group of concerned Catholics who believe, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, that "at all times, the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time, and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel, if it is to carry out its task." (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, #4). Looking at the Church in Australia today, a number of characteristics become apparent which are having, or will have in the next decades, a profound effect on the ability of the faithful and their shepherds to nurture their faith and make manifest the Kingdom of God through their faith life. These characteristics include, but are not limited to

- smaller congregations, but an increasing willingness in those congregations to share the baptismal commission to be a priestly and prophetic voice in the world.
- diminishing numbers of locally trained ordained ministers and professed religious.
- divestment of physical assets to meet new needs, including commitments to the Redress Scheme consequent upon the Church's response to the Royal Commission into the institutional Response to Child Abuse.

- an increasingly embedded cultural divide between the People of God and foreign ordained clergy, imported on a rotational basis to ensure the provision of the sacraments without effective concomitant cultural training.
- better educated congregations who wish to integrate their faith experience with the principles of ecological and social justice, so that their faith is aligned with the moral imperatives of living in and for this world, as well as for the next.
- Ongoing challenges to the widely acknowledged problem of clericalism and abuse of power where manifested in the Church's structure and relationships. To meet the challenges of this unprecedented new situation, we believe it is not an adequate response to simply try to reapply the solutions of the past. This is new wine; fresh wineskins are required (c.f. Matt 9:17). Nostalgia for the Christendom of the past is unproductive, and is in fact blind to the opportunities which the current situation presents to the Church: opportunities where ministry is shared between the ordained and unordained in innovative ways; opportunities to redefine an ordained ministry without the attendant dead-weight of clericalism; and opportunities to reawaken in all the Baptised their common vocation within the Body of Christ, by which term St Paul identifies the Church (1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:4). In short, God is asking the Church in Australia today to interpret our current and future situation through the prism of Jesus' foundational message, and, since our situation in a post-Christian world has elements in common with that of the pre-Christendom world of the early decades of the followers of Christ, to seek there the scriptural models of servant ministry and Christian life espoused by the early followers of the Jesus Movement, and made manifest by the Holy Spirit.

A radical restructuring of Church governance, to end the caste system of clericalism. To make genuine and authentic use of the resource for ministry and witness that is locked up within the 'laity'. For traditional leaders (the hierarchy) to be brave in taking risks, and taking up Francis's challenge to act courageously and creatively, as a bishops Conference, and fight for changes that are relevant to our Australian life (e.g. liturgical language and usage; pastoral responses to the divorced and remarried; a restructuring of ordained ministry; a new model of seminary education; a renewal of existing ordained ministry as service and facilitation, rather than as dominance and gate-keeping). For leaders, at all levels, to act in a consistently transparent and accountable way, to the wider community of faith. For clergy to be given regular feedback by their communities about their pastoral performance, positive strengths and limitations to be addressed (as for any modern exercise of professionalism). For serious resources to be put into developing. And deepening of the spiritual understanding and practice of the laity, at parish level. To actively and creatively pursue alternative structures for 'parishes', or faith communities, in ways that are not necessarily about geographical boundaries. For our leadership, both lay and ordained, to be more outspoken about social justice issues, even at the risk of seeming 'political'.

To be more a follower of Jesus, doing what he would be doing if he was still on earth. We need to listen to the needs of others, to be prayerful, helpful, loving, supportive, peaceable and inclusive. The clerics need to realise they are servants of God, as is the laity. High-ranking clerics need to know more about living in the real world.

One of the things I believe God is asking of us now is to seek ways to allow women feel more welcome and included in the Church, at all levels, celebration, leadership and decision-making.

To build a Church that is more inclusive of lay women and men; To find ways to make that obvious, transparent, accountable, in a spirit of collegiality; To form our seminarians in a way that builds and mirrors, that...

Let's please start the long road to gender equality in the Catholic Church by at least using inclusive language. Why would we assume that it's God's will to make women invisible by calling them men, sons and brothers? It seems to me an affront to God—who made both male and female, as well as to women themselves not to even recognise their existence in our Church language. I can no longer excuse it as "quaint". It is unjust and untenable and part of a long standing rejection of the feminine in the Church.

We think God is asking us to:

- Re: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
 - o seek forgiveness for the Church's wrongdoing;
 - o address the issues raised in the commission responsibly;
 - o hold those in authority to account for what happened;
 - o change the arrogant, old school, boys' club mentality within the hierarchy of the Church;
 - o have faith and remain with the Church in the wake of the commission;
 - o recognise that the reputation of the priesthood has been tarnished by the commission, but that there are many honest and hardworking priests who need our support and loyalty.
- Progressive thinking and moving with the times
 - o blast open the doors of the Church and embrace diversity;
 - o ordain women to the priesthood—there is no reason to hold back on this and women would make gifted preachers;
 - o make priestly celibacy optional—this would mean that
 - § there would be more local priests and less need to import priests;
 - § priests would understand family life better;
 - § married clergy may be more able to nourish parish community life because they could more easily relate to the everyday concerns of parishioners.
 - o update the Sunday liturgy and make it more relevant for people's lives
 - § make the Church more accessible to children and their families;
 - § shorten Sunday liturgies because families are time-poor;
 - § make homilies more relevant by linking the Word to everyday realities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish and parish school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o reconnect school and parish for the benefit of both—building a pastoral relationship with school families means community building for the whole parish; o develop a strongly collaborative relationship between parish and school; o link the sacramental programme directly with Sunday Mass—if the training sessions happen during Mass, this might encourage families to be more involved in Sunday worship; o remind school parents (at enrolment time etc.) about their responsibility and commitment to practice their faith and keep their baptismal promises; o allow for faith formation opportunities for school parents, e.g., creatively engaging them in the sacramental programme. • Other comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o support foreign priests with more training and mentoring—give them substantial cultural (especially language) preparation so that they are less stressed and able to serve the community more effectively; o re-connect youth with Church by enabling them to put their faith into action through community engagement activities, e.g. social justice outreach etc.
<p>I think God is asking us to make the Sacrifice of the Eucharist more understandable to the people. One simple way to start to achieve this is to show DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME on that part of the altar cloth facing the congregation.</p>
<p>To believe in him and give our money to the Church (not a scam).</p>
<p>I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time is that help people in need or just put a smile on someone’s face. Also, try and go to Church once in a while.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us in Australia at this time to help those in need and less fortunate so that they can live the life they have always wanted.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to be ourselves and to welcome everyone from everywhere, no matter who they are. God asks us to include people to make a wider community and a wider society. People in Australia believe that God is asking us to just be kind to our neighbours and to except diversity.</p>
<p>To respect and listen to one another.</p>
<p>God is asking us to follow the mission of Jesus and be a good individual. God asks that we love one another and treat other fairly.</p>
<p>To love and accept one another.</p>
<p>What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Australia - Openness and respect for all groups who have come to Australia—religions, cultural and national groups.</p>

- Fear. The dark side of life seems to be affecting, gripping, humanity = depression
- Effects of de-sacredization (*sic*) of society? E.g., suicide rate is definitely climbing!

The Church in Australia

- The Eucharist—Source and summit of the Christian Life (Lumen Gentium)
 - o Do we need to look at priesthood as we know it today?
 - o Married priests need to become a reality
 - o Women in the Church—ordained as deacons as in the early Church
 - o ADULT CATHOLIC EDUCATION—Education of people in the pews
 - o Ignorance can be the root of disrespect, e.g., understanding Islam and other religions would possibly improve living side-by-side with them
 - o For the people in the pews to hear what theologians, Vatican II, the spiritual teachers of Christian tradition, etc., have to offer them today
 - o Catholic schools are trying in a difficult culture to the teachers need formation in being ‘PRAYERS’
- Universal call to Holiness
 - o How to inspire and develop holistic human, incarnational living?
 - o “I am spiritual, but I don’t go to Church!” How to attend to the spiritual needs of people today and into the future?
 - o It was thought that married priests would bring a new depth—a change to spirituality
 - o Learn from, be open to other Christians’ understanding and expression of spirituality, scripture and theology
 - o Prayer is the key, the flame. As elderly Religious we are part of this key. Religious life a gift from God to pray NOW. We are the silver headed brigade
- Prayer
 - o Relationship with Jesus is the key. Educate the head and the heart
- Language
 - o The importance of speaking a “common” language was highlighted, e.g., what is understood today by such words as purify, holiness, healing, etc.?
 - o The same word can have so many different meanings (to different generations), so many different emotive connections
 - o Inclusive language needs to be addressed by the Church
- The Elderly
 - o The Church tries to meet the physical needs of the elderly, but the deeper spiritual needs at this stage of life...?

<p>- Social Justice issues—poor, homeless</p>
<p>We think God wants us to be able to focus on welcoming others and accepting of our differences, to be more inclusive of the marginalised and vulnerable. To find opportunities to put our faith into action and be able to live that faith not just make token gestures of support. We would like more opportunities for small sharing groups with discussions and learning ... about God in history, in spirituality, in theology and in action. Surely God is leading us to a place of greater involvement for women in positions of leadership and guidance in the Australian Church today. God wants us to understand what is truly important and work towards enhancing that.</p>
<p>God is asking us to have faith in him and love one another as he and his son Jesus Christ have done so themselves.</p>
<p>1. Involvement/inclusion of women in decision making at highest level. Men have not done well in direction Church has taken in relation to sexual abuse. In trying to protect themselves from scrutiny have exposed themselves and the whole Church to disgrace, disappointment, loss of trust—wider consultation may have stopped this much earlier. 2. Have something either at Diocesan or parish level inviting all parishioners including victims of abuse to come together for a healing and forgiveness ritual—open to media—let the world see that we are moving on together as one Body of Christ asking the Holy Spirit to walk with us as we heal and forgive each other 3. To continue to foster our people and ourselves to open our hearts and ask God to touch us in an intimate and loving way so that we may encounter God/Jesus/Spirit as God really is—always loving us. Once this happens, we will want to go to Mass and want to reach out to others, to be there for each other.</p>
<p>Bringing Jesus to the people—Adoration for children and teaching them the Gospel more in Catholic schools e.g. if maths is 5 hrs per week why is Religion 1hr, what message is it sending. Introducing prayers before meal breaks in the Catholic schools. Prayer culture. Put the emphasis back on God and loving Him.</p>
<p>Need of Catechesis, Proclamation of Truth, application of knowledge of Gospel teaching, renewed effort to love, be compassionate and caring, stop following the flavour of the moment, valuing the Church, less obsession with collection of money, need program to help people value their Christian life, not stigmatizing people—do practical works of mercy, not shame people for their state of life but uphold the Truth, practice altruistic service, love and Truth to be brought together, do not give in to fear, veneration of Mary important.</p>
<p>We need everybody to feel that they have an active role in the Church and that they are needed. This is for those currently active in the Church and also for those who are unchurched. Many people do not see the necessary role that they have to play as a child of God and it is important that they understand the value they have as a child of God and a missionary disciple. Many more would take up their role in the Church if they better understood their role and had a sense of belonging in the Church.</p>
<p>We feel that lay people need to take an official and more active role in the day-to-day operation of parishes, freeing up priests and ensuring a sense of continuity in developing a parish vision. The role of both lay people and the ordained ministers needs to be redefined. Each parish needs to be</p>

recognised as the spiritual and communal hub for the whole community in which it is situated—the go-to place for spiritual, emotional and physical needs.

That Catholic schools showcase and foster their Catholic identity, creating a Catholic spiritual environment that provides the seedbed to nurture and support Catholic family life.

I feel that God is asking us, the Church, to come to a place of deep communion and union with Christ who is One with the Father through the Holy Spirit (John 17), We are His Body so need to recognize our belovedness as children of Abba through prayer and treasuring the Word of God in our daily lives. We, every single one of us, need to repent sincerely as in the time of Nineveh. None of us is sinless so we need to recognize our poverty and surrender to the love and mercy of God's forgiveness and reclaim our birthright in Christ through our baptism. We need to return to Him and be healed. When one suffers, we all suffer. We need to be people of faith (Hebrews 11:1). Abraham staggered not through unbelief and Elizabeth called Mary "blessed" because she believed that the word of the angel would be fulfilled. We need to believe and thank God that the gates of hell will not prevail against his Church, but that the Lord is "able to do abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine". We need to make disciples, people of every age but especially our young (Matthew 28:19). We need to continue the journey with our Catechumens and Candidates after their Easter commitment. We need to rejoice and thank God for his life and love actively seen in many ways and places in our Church. A strong voice as the institutional Church and also as individuals is needed to advocate for the marginalized: disabled, divorced and re-married, LGBT, homeless ... We need to put God first, act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God.

To become a fellowship fashioned on the humanity of Jesus.

I believe we are being called to reshape our Church into something that is more akin to the example given by Jesus Christ when he walked this earth, and therefore something more relevant to the poor and disadvantaged of Australia, as well as those poorer neighbours to whom we can reach out. I believe we are being called to move away from the "power and authority" model that has failed our Church and instead become genuine servant leaders as modelled by Jesus Christ. Our Church is regularly criticised for being wealthy and not using that wealth for the good of society. So, I would like to suggest that consideration be given to greater utilisation of our churches. We have more churches than we need, especially with declining attendances, and so it would be wonderful if we could deconsecrate every church that is not well utilised and convert them to accommodation for the homeless or for families suffering domestic violence, or indeed for a range of other charitable uses. Similarly, many of our bishops, and some of our priests, live in very large residences that are greatly underutilised. It would be a true reflection of Jesus' example if those residences were also turned over to accommodation for the poor and downtrodden, and our Church leaders lived more simply.

I believe God and the spirit is asking us to be more inclusive and welcome back to the Church into full communion people who are divorce and remarried which is more than half of families these days as Jesus came for the sinner. I also believe God would be asking us to open wide our doors and our hearts and the Church's pockets to invite young people back into a Church that is relevant for them which includes modern Christian music and preaching that is relevant for them to

encounter Jesus Christ active in their lives. This needs to happen in the Catholic schools as well. Really listen to the young people and cater for their needs including having Mass times that suit their lifestyle and having a church that welcomes them with enthusiasm. If they are thinking of getting married which is quite rare for young people in a church, there should be no charge for getting married. We should embrace them with a quality pre-marriage and ongoing marriage formation and education for life long marriage which is essential at no charge. Big changes need to happen and education of the priest to be actioned to be relevant to deal with today's society changes with families and the issues they are dealing with on a daily basis. At the moment the priest is out of touch with what is going on they need to go out and get involved with the movements and see where the sparks of life are happening in the Church.

- Chester Wenger a Mennonite pastor answers this for us - As Christians we believe that God sent his Son to die to be a beacon for our lives through him, to him. If this is our faith, maybe the best way to answer this question, is to reframe it—what would Jesus do if he was in Australia today. He would no doubt, as he did 2000 years ago, go to temples/churches where his father's (and now his name) is preached, and through his love, generosity juxtapose his life with those that represent him and his father. Why? Because as our faith rightly says, we the Church are in him and him in us, and he loves us so much, as the shepherd he is, he does not want to lose any of his flock. - Chester Wenger - So what would Jesus do in our Church today? As he did 2000 years ago, tell us the story of the Good Samaritan in a modern way, where a gay person, or maybe a molested child cast aside on a road, or on the steps of the Lords house and three people, a priest, bishop and archbishop entered the other side of the Church to avoid them. Then maybe an Atheist or Muslim takes them in, feeds them, listens to them. It will either make the Church leaders of our time be disgusted in the story, or understand how far our rituals and dogma of today are more important than acting with the grace and generosity we have been shown by our father. -Chester Wenger- If Jesus was here today, he would be asking us not to live in the hypocrisy of words, but live and act a life in integrity with our faith. It would be sad to say, but he might just have to die again to get the world to understand how far we have gone from the message of his Father and his own. I can't do Chester Wenger's story justice but I would recommend the Plenary Council do two things. Play Malcolm Gladwell's Podcast of revisionist history and then read his open letter. A URL/Web link will be provided. I think it clearly articulates what God is asking of us in Australia, more importantly, what would Jesus do? It talks about Generous Orthodoxy—What would Jesus do, and Chester Wenger lives it, believes it and is in peace with his faith and his family because of it. <https://themennonite.org/daily-news/mennonite-pastor-featured-malcolm-gladwell-podcast/>

When I came to the meeting I had thought about my experience of Church as a faithful Catholic and the fact my children had gathered erroneous views of morality and lost their faith after attending Catholic schools. However after the prayer these Bible phrases came to mind "itching ears" and "in season out of season" and so I looked them up and will submit them instead.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 3:15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 3:16 All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 3:17 that the man of God may be perfected, equipped for every

good work. 4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 4:2 preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 4:3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, 4:4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.

This seems to be what the Holy Spirit would have me submit for your consideration.

Remove (or at least minimize dramatically) Homelessness in Australia. If we knew a Homeless person is Jesus Christ, what will we do? Why aren't we doing the same? A change in attitude is all is needed. Attitudes change with education, teaching and perseverance.

God is asking us to abandon those laws of Man which hold us back as a Catholic community. God has spoken to us through the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse, just as HE has spoken again through the Royal Commission into the Banking system, and the message is clear that there has been a lack of moral leadership, and people has lost Trust and Faith. Overwhelmingly people have stopped listening to the unconvincing arguments against married men and women in the Church. I have been a leader of a small Family Group of mostly 6 couples and some singles, and I have witnessed many fine men over 50-55 whose children have left home, have had successful business careers, the mortgage is under control, and who are looking to make a difference in the world. We need a Ministry pathway for them that competes with joining political parties, interest groups, clubs and organisations. Imagine the middle age senior executive and what he, or she, could bring to the parish community. In my view, over time the age of the people entering when decrease, not increase, as other men and woman the next generation down see Christ in action. As a boy, people remained at the front of the Church after Mass for up to one hour talking to each other. We need to engage people more, and be more evangelical even amongst ourselves. None of my children go to Mass, except for the big occasions and only then partly to please me. Yet they are all good people and still hold good Catholic values, etc. When I ask then why, they say it is boring and they get nothing out of it. They are the iPod and McDonalds lives in the fast lane generation. The Church has failed to keep up with ME centric people. Incremental change will not work. Whatever we do has to be bold, brave, and cut through onto their smart phones and ear plugs. Women clergy would be radical and capture attention immediately. Married clergy would be the next headline grabbing step. Strong leadership and management of this diverse group of Ministers would be paramount, and discipline should be visible and fast. Lastly, the Church hierarchy should not be timid in speaking out on social justice issues and get engaged more willingly in the political debates of this country. This should filter right down to the local parish pulpit level. We must not be afraid to upset our Labour and Liberal politicians for fear of offence and risk of funding cuts.

You must agree that divorce during the time of the Bible, especially the consequences related to the woman and the ease with which a man could obtain it, was very much different to divorce today. Also, it was accepted to have a slave, as long as one treated them fairly! Not today, of course. So it is quite plain to see that life was much different during His times. So, why does the Church today treat divorce differently to owning slaves? Of course you can see from where I am coming (divorced and remarried in a Protestant ceremony—on advice of a Catholic priest). Oh,

how I wish this could have been in a Catholic Church. I once applied for an annulment but it was refused. A priest, in this archdiocese, once refused to give me absolution! I have several friends in the USA who have told me it was quite easy to obtain their annulments over there, and in different dioceses. They say they were provided with someone, by the diocese, to help them prepare their statements. I was not given any help or assistance in preparing my case and had no help whatsoever in addressing the real issues that would have been beneficial to my cause. Not surprisingly it was refused. Of course, and I know you will deny it, but it is somewhat different here for people "in the know" and connected! My wife (an RCIA convert), and I would love to live full, committed and participating Catholic lives. As a matter of fact we do—but not with the Church's blessing. Make it official. Are we to be dumped on the waste and made to live a single chaste life? Have you not learned anything from the Royal Commission?

1. Equity for women in the Roman Catholic Church. 2. Hospitality and Eucharist.

I feel as long-time practicing Catholic who has always been very active in whichever parish I have lived in [-], [-], [-] and [-]. And over those years have seen the decline of our Church. The main reasons I feel have contributed to this are, 1. The Pill and the birth control issue. 2. The disallowing of 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. 3. Secularisation of Society. 4. The Sexual / Physical abuses and the way the Hierarchy have swept it under the carpet when they must have known it was occurring.

There needs to be a re-education here. Starting from schools and homes. Our young parents of today, do not know their Faith as it has not been taught in the Catholic schools. My own children went through the Catholic system. We need to relook at the Vatican II. What they said was good but not interpreted that way. The Church in Australia lacks a deep Faith. You only have to look at the way people are in the Church on Sundays. Discipline needs to get back in every avenue in the Church. RESPECT for priests and others.

To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Mic 6:8

The challenge systemically is to modify/moderate our hierarchy with community involvement at all times, our bureaucracy with on-site service, our patriarchy with inclusivity of all, and our gerontocracy with the empowering and resourcing the younger members. We have to have quality liturgies in our parishes and communities. This needs constant nurturing. These liturgies have to flow out to and bring back witness from concrete social action. In particular we must engage with climate change, mental health issues, the mistreatment of the elderly and disabled persons, refugees and other hot button issues. Some of our positions will not be popular, but they will witness our values all the better for that. Above all, in our litigious society full of paper and cards and permissions and bureaucracy we must stand up for and witness to forgiveness, mercy and yet more chances for those who struggle and fail. Our Catholic schools are expensive and failing in their core mission to communicate the Catholic tradition of Christianity. They've become yet another bureaucratic jungle, and a career channel for many practical pagans. We have to prune this system back to its essential purpose. This will tighten enrolment and employment among them desirable to those who really want what we're offering. Families need to be engaged in creative ways to support them in their struggle to pass on a living faith, and make sense of this rapidly changing world. Various catechetical measures and methods out of school hours have to

be mandatory in preparing for the celebration of the sacraments with adults and young people... Whatever we think of parishes they continue to remain central to our communion. Real, on site, on the ground support must be given to parishes to relieve the increasing management demands, freeing people and leaders up to do what matters and unites us in Christ. Phone calls, emails and edicts from GHQ don't help nor do they really work. It's long overdue to put resources into prayer and spiritual direction and directors for all, not yet more PowerPoints or lectures/inputs. Individual prayer and small groups prayer in all styles and methods has to be encouraged, but must be related to the outreach/greater mission to society and the world God is saving. Our Ordained need quality formation and freedom to do what they are Ordained to do; preach passionately, teach wisely and relevantly, dream and plan for their communities boldly and pray for us all lovingly. There are simply too many Masses in our Cities, too few in the country and too many sacraments being dispensed rather than being celebrated meaningfully. Lastly, ongoing dialogue, prayer and engagement with other Christians and other faiths must be continued and broadened. All of these initiatives will take time and resources and committed people to implement. But, if we don't do something we'll just keep doing the same and the slippage will continue unabated. Thank you...

When attending the Plenary Council meeting in our parish I wrote 4 words: Fidelity, Prayer, Hope, Forgiveness.

To consider allowing our Catholic Clergy to lead a married life. I worry that when my age group dies Mass attendance will drop even more. If priests were allowed to marry, their young families attending the services would be such a good example for other young people. To consider allowing divorced Catholics to receive Holy Communion.

1. More inclusive Church, 2. Rebuild the Church (In a spiritual sense), 3. Outreach to Church and unchurched, 4. Are we living the life God wants to live, 5. What sort of life did Jesus live and how do we follow his example? 6. The Church needs to be more explicit about making the connection between the Church is and what we do? i.e. being there for people in need.

To pray that decisions and thoughts are for the benefit of ALL Australians as a multicultural society. To be open to 'Change'. To utilise women to a higher degree within the Church. For younger people to keep the faith—implement plans and ideas. Stand up against Political Correctness. Lead by example. To rebuild the Church. To imagine new ways of worship. Old traditions + new ways. To be comfortable in our Catholicism with its imperfections. To inspire young people. To inspire sacred and mysterious reflection. New forms of worship. Schools—maybe smaller and more authentically Catholic. Priests + new ways *Married priests. *Women priests *Option to be a priest for a fixed period, e.g. years of service then 'lay life'. Connect with persecuted Church e.g. Middle East, China. More tolerant to understand others. Helpful in the community care for the elderly. Form family groups. Try to understand why young people aren't belonging to the Church. Help older people to understand young people. Teach people to pray. Shelter for kids. Simplify as founded by Jesus Christ. Fewer Rules. Lay Ministers. Simplify Marriage Annulment. (less stressful). 2nd rite of Reconciliation (very popular for every group). Young people to be more involved in the Church. To revitalise the Church in Australia by: *Increasing the number of priests and religious. *involve the laity in decision making. *giving women more roles and responsibilities (including being priests). Maybe priests choose marriage or celibacy. More

deacons. To bring the youth into the Church. Be where they ARE at a balance of social/spiritual. Ground Roots; *School and Church. Being more involved in the schools. Families children need direction—involve youth AND parents. Schools—spiritual education. Identify non-negotiable issues. To re-establish the Church as a STRONG voice. Lessen the training time for Deacons.

Address the major problem of sexual abuse by members of the clergy.

1. Radically eliminate clericalism and give the laity their proper share in guiding the Church. 2. Change adult members of the laity from Churchgoers to missionary disciples. 3. Proclaim the messages of Pope Francis' Laudato Si' to all the faithful in such way that they accept that care for the environment is integral to the Gospel and they actively work for this pressing need. 4. Proclaim the Church teachings on social justice to all the faithful so that they accept that social justice is integral to the Gospel and work actively for social justice. 5. Make celibacy for priests optional. 6. Welcome back to ministry priests who have left the priesthood to marry and who wish to return. 7. Reduce the resort to abortion by pregnant women who are being pressured to abort by partners or family or financial concerns by providing sufficient support for those pregnant women to carry their child to birth. 8. Discern how to engage and bring to active faith those parents who send their children to Catholic schools but are not Church goers. 9. Discern how to engage and bring to active faith the many people who attend Mass at Easter and Christmas or for baptisms but not otherwise.

- Be more progressive, open to change; Be willing to listen to criticism and improve.
- Be open to different interpretations of faith.
- Have more women in significant roles in the Church.
- Be aware of the Church's impact and influence, and use it positively.
- Dialogue with young people to develop programs to engage youth in the Church.
- Show compassion for refugees and migrants, Indigenous people, Islamic people and minority religions, divorcees, LGQTBI people ... to provide a safe space for the marginalised.
- Be conscious of our responsibilities as stewards of creation, particularly in regard to mining, the Great Barrier Reef and nature conservation in general.
- Promote equality within the community.
- Assist other countries which are less fortunate, such as PNG and Timor Leste.
- Protect children in our communities.
- Providing a platform for less fortunate Australians to have a voice and access the country's wealth.
- The Church to encourage greater consultation with laity.
- Create a Church that is more focused on core values, not just the rules.
- Be slower to condemn those who are different.
- Create a Church that is more progressive and not necessarily tied to old traditions.
- Be more respectful and open-minded.
- That we are to respond with love and forgiveness to challenges such as child abuse by the clergy. Healing is needed on both sides.
- To speak and act for equity and justice.
- Dismantle the models of leadership in the Church; cut down patriarchal structures of the Church.
- To think about who God is for us.
- To work for an authentic Church which is inclusive and fosters a sense of belonging.
- To keep the essence of Jesus' message but cut away ego and power of the Church hierarchy.
- To peel away centuries of dogma and get back in touch with the mystical nature of the faith.
- To work for a Church that is less focused on the dogmatic and the sinful.
- To work for greater connectivity in our community with an emphasis on the human connection.
- To work towards liturgical experiences that are more meaningful to a contemporary congregation; one where messages of hope are proclaimed.
- To live the Catholic values and model those values.
- To work for a community and a Church where everyone feels welcome.
- To raise the profile and relevance

of a Catholic education because schools are the most significant place of contact with Church many of our students have. • To remember who we are in God—this knowing will come from within us • To rethink our understanding of leadership within the Church and local parishes. • To be conscious of negative messages that can lead to feelings of disconnection. • To foster a sense of inclusion in our youth. • To promote the values of compassion, service and justice in our community. • To show mercy to those in need—e.g. Those encountering war/instability, refugees, homeless, those affected by abuse. • To consider and act now on sustainability and make it a part of people’s everyday lives

1. Help people to realize that the sexuality of people with same sex attraction does not define them. The person who has this attraction is so much more than this and is a much-loved child of God. 2. The Catholic Church in Australia might want to produce its own movies to enlighten people and increase their faith. 3. I think that the Catholic Church in [-] needs to have a library for the general public to access, like The Ligourian Library that used to be open in the city.

To be more involved with prayer which I view as being in 2 forms: 1. formal i.e. Mass, other Church services, the rosary, 2. informal—where we just communicate with God through a casual mind talk, i.e. going over our aspirations, hopes, spiritual requests in our mind in a personal moment. If we want to do well in the secular world we have to work towards those ends. The same applies in the spiritual world and, if we believe in God, we have to apply energy to it, God will answer. 3. To help others where and when we can even if it's just to say hello. 4. Seeing to the care of this planet as we have been given custodianship of it.

- To examine the lack of connection by the youth and young families to the formal groups within the Church. Our connection is being lost with the younger generations.

- To re-group after the Royal Commission and present all the wonderful work that is done in our schools, hospitals and charitable organisations to the public to show that the Church still has a vital role to play in our society.

- Examine new ways of ministering following the collapse of vocations in the priesthood and religious orders.

- To support our clergy to carry out their primary role of spreading the gospel.

- To evangelise especially, children and young families.

- To be non-judgemental in relation to those who are "different".

- Provision for the homeless.

- Compassionate action for refugees and asylum seekers.

- Care of our earth.

- To encourage more men to participate more fully in parish life.

- Scripture study, feminist view point e.g. Mary Coloe, Bishop [-], [-] diocese.

- Speak to all bishops.

- Lay pastoral ministers.

- Support and formation.
- Adequate study.
- Seminarians to study in depth Vatican II documents.
- Before asking "What do you think God is asking of us at this time" I wish to state that I don't think God is asking us to go backwards to returning to past worship practices, which I sense that the present Church is moving into.
- Be still and know (that I am) God. Take a mirror to ourselves to see why so much apathy (even antagonism) not so much to God but the people of God (the Church).
- Because of our stand against breaking of Church laws (perceived God's laws), we are judged as judgemental. Tit for tat.
- Our Government policies (refugee/asylum seekers, climate control, abortion) is activism called for—but to what effect?
- Canon Law—inclusive sexuality/sacraments/marriage and divorce.
- Lectionary and Missal—contemporary language—Not to go backwards (Oratory, Opus Dei, [-] going backwards).
- Be still. Take a mirror to ourselves (People of God).
- Politics, Climate Change, Abortion
- Spirituality of Ageing.
- Formation and training for young women and men in Lay Pastoral Ministry.
- Voice of women in Archdiocese of [-].
- Grief and Loss support (transitional times).
- Pastoral care of all parishioners—freedom of Lay Pastoral Ministers to do this.
- Co-responsible Pastoral ministry for Lay and Ordained.
- Transitional Spirituality of Aged.
- Equal pay for Lay Pastoral Ministers.
- Women priests.
- Accepting married priests back into the Church.
- Third Rite of Reconciliation.
- Healing of what has gone in the past in the Church with the Sexual Abuse by Clergy and Religious—How can trust be restored when it appears that the bishops are not open to accepting responsibility of what has happened and following through with recommendations by Commission.
- To be outgoing and caring Christian communities that attract all to share fully in the life of the communities and the sacraments.

- To bear witness to the values of the Gospels by actively defending the vulnerable.
- To promote equality and wealth sharing within the entire community.
- Ensure that celibacy of priests is optional, not compulsory.
- Candidates for the priesthood should be older and have experienced life in the secular world.
- Their time at the seminary should include more work in the parishes.
- Consider allowing priests to marry (abandon celibacy, this should allow more men to become priests, allows the priest to have faith and experience of/with their own family).
- Married priests.
- Acknowledgement of Pastoral Minister (not glorified secretaries, acknowledge the enormous PASTORAL aspect of the role).
- Baptism for all.
- Modernise the Church's perspectives (address contemporary topics including their connection to theology and spirituality in an energised, truthful and actionable plan).
- To be energised Christians implementing the mission of the Beatitudes for all Australians in need.
- Becoming the "light on the hill".
- To improve the language of the Roman Missal to be more comprehensible and conducive for prayer.
- To review the language of the Roman Missal for its comprehensibility and conduciveness for prayer and its role in shaping us as a faith community
- To grow in our understanding of language for and practices of personal Christian Spirituality .
- To re-contextualise our theological understandings about God, Jesus, Spirit for 21st Century post-modern Christians and others.
- Be Church in places other than traditional structures.
- Less focus on JUST survival.
- Be authentic.
- Be sincere in our love and care for all.
- Continue to be at the forefront of humanitarian work.
- Increase participation at all levels.
- More gender equality in Church.
- A Church that more people want to be a part of.
- That the benefits that the Church provides will be more evident to all, both those who currently participate and those who might participate.
- That our young will want to return to the Church.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More parishioners interest in Church matters. - Have a Church that is a source of pride. - To become a stronger and more caring country both for the people and the land. - Stronger programs for young adults and newly married. - To be energised Christians serving our brothers and sisters in need, from homeless to frail elderly to refugees to depressed and vulnerable minorities; becoming "light on the hill", a perpetual light! - To be motivated into action promoting social justice across our vast and sick land. - Modernising the Church's perspective, really addressing contemporary topics. - Be authentic and sincere.
<p>God is asking of us in Australia to love one another like he loves us and to accept all God's Children.</p> <p>God is asking us to have more faith and to trust in him more. If a priest is being called to live two lives such as: A priest and a husband or partner than truly he is not called to be a priest. God asks for you to give your whole self, completely and that is what the parish priest says in his homilies also for availability.</p>
<p>God would like the shepherds to be authentic in their work. Too many priests are not capable by their limitations in personality or by their lack of good formation to lead by example and therefore people cannot connect—particularly young people. Young people have a "crap" detector and they cannot stand to listen to priests who preach one thing and act in another way. Come to think of it, neither do adults. We call for transparency in parishes, but due to the lack of ordained; priests are behaving in a manner which would quite frankly have them fired in a corporate world, but due to lack of numbers their behaviour of bullying in the workplace, mediocre preaching and passive aggressive treatment of parishioners and community is what drives people away from the Church. Catholic schools have adapted by having lay leadership due to orders running out of numbers to run their schools, so why don't dioceses do the same thing. Leadership teams should be running parishes and priests can be posted to a deanery which then uses them for sacraments. People have lost trust in the clergy and do not require them for pastoral needs anymore. Homosexual priests are also a problem when they have a tendency to keep their special friends close by. Again.....no action is taken due to lack of transparency and priests who act like "Gods".</p>
<p>We believe that God is asking the Catholic Community of Australia for more accountability.</p>
<p>God is asking that the Church become relevant and start communicating with the real world in a way that the real world is likely to respond to.</p>
<p>We believe that the Church of Australia is being called to be more inclusive and thereby reduce the power of clericalism.</p>
<p>Forgiveness, Respect, Nonjudgmental, Reconnecting schools and parishes.</p>

To keep in mind that God thinks we are all equal no matter who we are, what our education or our sexual orientation. God does not make judgments of us on our status as a human. God is trying to let us make a world better for everyone.

To respond to genuine Catholic people who feel that the Church is not listening to us but are stuck in laws made by men sometimes in ancient times. Small minorities seem to have plenty to say and are listened to whereas the normal run of the mill Catholic are ignored. We are aware of a number of men who have left the priesthood to become married men. These are good practicing men who would make wonderful parish priests but not allowed because of a law instituted in the 1400s. Of the apostles it is my understanding that John was the only single man selected by Jesus.

God is asking us to pay more than lip service to the dignity of women. Throughout the world women are treated as less than males and the Church gives assent to this treatment by not allowing women full participation as priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and yes popes. The Church says that women aren't good enough by keeping all these roles exclusively for men. Yet God thought a woman good enough to start the whole story of the Church. God is saying, "Let women take their true place in the Church."

The possibilities for the Catholic Church in Australia for the future are potentially great. However, with the situation of the Church at this time, the future will have trouble with the Church's credibility, let alone having the potential for influencing our society. THE PROBLEM OF ABUSE: Of the 80% or so of the abused, what percentage of it covered 14-25 years old people, i.e. adolescents and immature adults? The current safeguarding programme seems to adequately protect the minors, but what about this older group which may include seminarians? What, if anything, is being done to clear the clergy and religious of homosexually inclined priests and brothers? I read in a recent report that 80% of young people who go to Catholic schools will, by the time they finish secondary school, or within a few years of doing so, have left the Catholic Church. In the 50 years since Vatican II, Mass attendance on Sundays has plummeted from fairly full Churches to about 10% attendance. Many of the parents of the current children were poorly catechized in the years after the council and rarely put a foot inside the Church. They are poor examples to their children. These children and the non-attending adults are the lost sheep that we need to reach out to and evangelize. The main purpose of the episcopate and clergy is to save souls. It almost feels like we have a "Not at Home" sign in the window. To start with, we need to catechize the people with the orthodox truths and doctrines of the Church—what is outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Catholics need to learn to view the world from a spiritual viewpoint; not the Church from a secular viewpoint. Catholics are meant to be in the world, not of the world; to be a light to the world; a sign of contradiction to the world. We need to get back to the basics. Who made me? Why did God make me? We are meant to be holy. I doubt that most children really know this. Catholics need to hear the moral teachings of the Church proclaimed from the pulpit; not the secular version that we are so regaled with by society and our clergy. For the past five years we have had the virtue of mercy continuously preached to us. This is a very important virtue. However, God is not just all merciful, but all just. These two go together. To split these two attributes as has been done will lead to an unhealthy attitude. The other word that has been continuously thrown at us for about five years is "accompanying". We are told we need to accompany people who are in illicit marriages; non-Catholics in mixed marriages should be able to

receive communion, even if they don't believe in the Real Presence, as long as they receive in good conscience. Does it matter anymore that the sacraments are (a) A part of the rites of becoming a Catholic, and (b) That to receive the sacraments, especially Communion, you need to believe that it is the Body and Blood of Jesus. The Real Presence.

God is asking the Catholic Church in Australia to stand firm to the Traditions of her beliefs which have been handed down legitimately since the time of Christ. Reverently offered Mass is required; hymns that speak of and to God not of and to ourselves. Instructions on the sacraments and sanctifying grace needs to be heard from the pulpit. Authentic Catholic teaching is needed in the schools to stem the haemorrhage from the faith. Students need to know how to defend the Catholic Faith so when they go into the world and university they have the answers to the hard questions from a Catholic viewpoint. Protestant programs like Alpha in parishes do nothing to shore up true Catholic teaching and doctrine.

I myself would like a revision of the new translation of the Roman Missal. I have been a Mass-going Catholic all my life. We were told that the revision of the English text developed following Vatican II would offer us "elevated" language. There are some texts I agree with e.g. "Lord, I am not worthy..." before Holy Communion as it takes us both to its scriptural roots and to our deepest immortal identity ("my soul shall be healed"). However, I find it discouraging when week after week, I find myself asking "What was that about?!" after the Prayers of the Mass and some parts of the Eucharistic Prayers are rattled off in clumsy sentences which are obviously longer than a comfortable breath containing words which are sometimes alienating, obscure or theological abstractions unrelated to my world's culture as I experience it. I find now charm in these texts and I cannot imagine how it is helping me or to shape me as a Catholic Christian beyond testing or cultivating my perseverance. Where are our young people in all of this? How can they be supported and educated by this kind of language in our liturgy! At the end of the submission, I am attaching comments of a group of teachers expressing what they think God is asking of us in Australia at this time.

- The Catholic Church in Australia has a mission to ensure the formation and leadership of laity from diverse groups and ages who will be active participants, reflecting the "mystical body of Christ" within a secular society.
- Liturgical/sacramental relevance—marriages/relationships (how divorce can separate people from the Church) (Future marriage).
- Liturgical/sacramental relevance—relevance for youth/music, being married not in the Church, not getting permission for wedding in garden for example.
- Resource Management—how the Church spends lot of money.
- Resource Management—Education/schools, how the youth are not continuing in faith.
- Structural Change—women play more important roles in the Church.
- New governance—women have more power.
- New governance—Finance.
- A more welcoming Church.

- Grass roots need to demand changes in Church e.g.: equality in Church, changes to priesthood (married, female priests, female deacons), time frame for changes (e.g. 6 years for female priests), changes in canon law.
- Back to basics—getting the message across.
- Clergy/laity to unite and evangelise in today's world.
- Discipleship—maturity—leads back to getting back to basics.
- The Church should look to ways of making the Church relevant to all sectors of the community, especially youth and marginalised.
- We go back to basics in terms of building communication of faith, education of/in the faith, enabling all people to be involved.
- Overall resume the Vatican II initiative and get back to the basics of the first couple of centuries.
- Be reflective (bottom up approach).
- Be revolutionary, bold and brave.
- Community, nurture engagement (not just Sundays).
- Shortage of priests.
- Ageing populations.
- Young families at Mass.
- Evangelisation.
- Engaging youth.
- Shortage of priests (consider women, married priests, lay participation, cultural representation).
- Generations Y and Z are unchurched reflecting lack of faith knowledge in Church and society.
- Women in Church decision making roles (all voices must be listened to).
- Liturgical relevance—more important roles for women.
- Structural change—relationships (i.e. marriage).
- Sacramental relevance—new governance—sacramental program change to defer reconciliation for children to a later age (10-14).
- Royal Commission not just monetary compensation but care for victims who suffer mental illness. Church must be pastoral and develop future programs.
- To make the Church attractive to teenagers and young adults.
- Youth involvement/ bring back to the Church.
- Youth how to reach them and how to pass the baton.
- Relevancy to youth and all cultures.
- Rebuilding our Church as a true family.

- Married clergy.
- Trusted guidance.
- Greater opportunity for laity involvement.
- EQUALITY.
- To support parents of young children.
- Have the [Catholic] leaders of our country listen to the Church communities.
- Think about ageing clergy and married priests.
- Safe guarding children from harm.
- Refugees.
- Evangelisation.
- Inclusion of our many cultures.
- Women are the backbone of the Church.
- Shortage of priests (married priests? women priest?).
- BACK TO BASICS OF GOSPEL MESSAGE.
- To support prisoners and those on parole.
- To be companions for lonely people.
- To help support those with mental illness.
- To help support those who are physically disabled.
- Power redistribution in the Church.
- Active and confident Church community who will petition Rome for change.
- Women as decision makers.
- Better resource management.
- Engagement of people in the life of Church (young, disinterested, ethnic groups).
- Recognition of the works of all in being the body of Christ (acting justly, love tenderly, walk humbly).
- Respect for wisdom of laity (more away from Canon laws and understand where people are coming from in own ways).
- Externally—help countries and people have self-determination and self-government.
- To build a caring community, based on shared beliefs and values, supporting each other, working together to foster fairness and justice internally and in the greater community.
- Internally—involve all (old to young, male, female, straight, gay) uniformly and equally.
- Externally—sharing wealth and reducing the gap between haves and have nots.

- To be inclusive with all having a say.
- Liturgical celebration should involve all and be made simple.
- Governance issues!! How can this better reflect the nature of the Church.
- The youth should be involved in every life of the Church.
- Reliance on priests from overseas who require visas from DFAT impairs our bishop's ability/desire to confront the sham of Nauru/Manus.
- Church should be a "spin" free zone, tell the truth.
- An honest look at the sacramental life and practice of the Church (weddings down, penance down, baptisms down, confirmation down, Eucharist—10% practice, ordination down).
- To be actively and equally involved in Church.
- Real participation.
- Engage the youth meaningfully.
- Youth relevance of the Church.
- Catholic schools should be Catholic schools that follow the mind and heart of Christ.
- Foundation of new parishes.
- Seminary formation to take place in the parishes and not behind Seminary walls.
- Seminaries should be improved with better formation of the candidates.
- Recruitment of parish leadership from both men and women.
- Church is losing ground in society due to increasing secularism.
- Church needs to speak the same language as youth.
- Church is being pruned/dying.
- Relevance of the Church for young people.
- YOUTH! Involvement—where are they, what are they doing?

God is asking us to love Him, to bear witness to Jesus and live saintly lives. I believe we are being asked to live in a more openly Christian way where it is apparent to those around us that Christ is central to our lives and hopes. There is an expectation from our secular society that religion will be a private practice and not interface with our public lives. I feel God wants us to speak of our faith and what it means to us. At this point in the Church's history I believe we are being asked by God to be a poorer Church and a Church that is weak in the eyes of the world. Victories and defeats are not to be measured by elections, judicial appointments or the approval or disapproval of the media or secular society. Dorothy Day when asked about why she was happy replied, "That I have never felt embarrassed to talk about God." I believe when discussing the hot-button issues of the day in the public domain e.g. abortion, euthanasia, marriage to name the most emotive, we need to mention God in our public responses and the ontological aspects of what it means to be fully human. Church leaders have spoken well on these issues recently however the name of Jesus

is never mentioned. This is understandable as we debating within the public sphere and no doubt such language will be met with disdain. However, in not doing so we do not reveal the ultimate source of our beliefs. I mention these examples with some reluctance as, in my own life and I believe in the life of the Australian Church they seem to consume much spiritual and emotional oxygen. As much as we need to engage with the world, we also need to relearn the ability to sit in silence and become aware of Christ's loving gaze upon us, to have a Gospel focus, to measure ourselves against the poverty of Christ and not world opinion. We need to go back upstream towards Christ, "the spring within the spring" (to quote Thornton Wilder). I believe we need to re-teach that concept of personal sinfulness and need for redemption with regular attendance to the sacrament of Penance. In keeping with the language of Pope Francis at times this will require counter cultural discussions on the nature of evil and the reality of Satan. We are being called to seek penance and turn our backs on sin and become saints. I am concerned that at times the Church sees its future as aligning with the spirit of the secular age. Many people feel that allowing married or women priests will be a positive step. I have heard good and holy people outline both sides of the argument. I feel it is false however to think this will win any converts or return people to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. When lapsed Catholic friends mention the need for married priests I ask if they will return to Mass if this happens and I am always met with blank looks. I don't want the Plenary to get bogged down in the weeds talking of these issues suffice to say our problems and answers lie deeper and will be found in prayer.

(1) That we treated one another with love and respect and show one another compassion. (2) That we celebrate diversity and become a Church that embraces change rather than tries to control people's lives. (3) That the Church seriously considers its role in the abuse of children and become totally transparent in their role during the history of Australia particularly when it comes to ATSIC. (4) That the Church becomes inclusive rather than exclusive welcoming people who are married, divorced or LGBTQI.

Catholic clerics have elevated themselves to the rank of Princes despite Jesus' exhortation to be servants of the servants and to follow his example of being humble enough to wash the feet of others. As a result, the Catholic Church is ordered like a pyramid with the Pope and Cardinals at the apex and the laity at the base—just like it was in the time of Christ. I don't think God has changed his mind about the role of his apostles, so I think he would say "invert the pyramid" so the clerics SERVE the spiritual needs of the world, and the laity control all financial matters.

To: look at the facts of Church workings, attendance, standing in the community; acknowledge the past in meaningful ways; return to the teachings of Jesus not just in words but in actions; attempt to be less authoritarian, arrogant, inclusive, male-dominated; and teach and demonstrate the value of the Christian tradition and how it has and does underpin our society and culture, our institutions (legal, political, educational), traditions and broad-based value structures.

That the Church be honest, open, frugal, aligned with the poor whoever they are and however that poverty is expressed. Bishops and clergy not to operate and live as elite but to live this option for the poor. Lay women and men included in effective decision making and given a determinative not consultative role in bishops' conferences, diocesan and parish administration. Underpinning this we need a theology and anthropology that are not outdated—a theology that justifies clergy separation/elitism, lay submission and female exclusion is founded on an

anthropology that is not realistic. Reinstate Third rite of reconciliation. Prepare a more appropriate translation of the liturgy. Celibacy optional. Ordain women. The justification for an all-male exclusive priesthood does not have historical foundations and is founded on a theological anthropology that is no longer reality. Bishops are not medieval princes. When asked about certain expensive and unnecessary structural changes, the bishop replied, 'It is my Church and I will do what I like in it'. So much for listening to the laity. Don't let people who want to return to the 19th century Church influence, ecclesial culture and theology.

TO LIVE JUSTLY, TO LOVE TENDERLY AND TO WALK HUMBLLY WITH YOUR GOD. Micah:6-8

For the Church to be an integral part of community—in times of celebration and despair. To welcome people of all ages.

To look to the future and be proactive in being educated in how we can become more of a community of communities who work towards taking Christ and His directives—through the gospel to all those we encounter.....

1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? I endorse Pope Francis' vision for the Church as presented in The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium. What a joy-filled, active and alive Church energized by the Holy Spirit that would be!

If we were to look back at the results from the Census in 2016, we can see Australia's faith is dwindling. God would want to see his proud, Christian nation be as it once was. God would be asking us to evangelize, bring back his lost sheep and save the declining faith. In doing this, we would need to completely reanalyse our methods for conversion and bringing back apostates. From what I have experienced, the best way to accomplish this is through embracing the Catholic Church's roots. Our Church is so steeped in history yet we do not use that as a force to interest people, instead we resort to modernist methods of trying to appeal to Millennials through what out of touch senior/middle aged parishioners think is cool. It is never cool. During my younger years I had completely lost my faith, because I could not take it seriously. I was never taught about the History, the foundations, the building blocks of the Catholic Church. I was taught through Guitar music and cheesy folk songs. I was completely lost until I decided to take it upon myself at 18 to learn about the deep History and immerse myself in a Traditional Catholic lifestyle. I went from going to Mass once a year on Christmas, to rarely missing weekly Sunday Mass. This is not just the case for myself too. Statistics show Traditional Catholicism is on the rise, yet very few Church officials care to capitalize on it.

End compulsory celibacy for priests. Allow women to be ordained priests. Start addressing the needs of single people in the Church and not just focus on families all the time. Reform Church governance—abolish bishops' conferences and delegate powers to the local Church level. Allow divorced and remarried folk to receive Communion. Start addressing the needs of elderly folk who cannot attend Church and others who don't attend—the Church is obsessed with buildings yet most of the faithful don't attend the physical structure of a Church—we need to totally rethink our concepts of outreach. Thank you for the opportunity to comment but I fear nothing will come of this process and it will be 'business as usual'. Pope Francis (who is wonderful) has given local

Churches the power to make decisions (e.g. regarding the end of compulsory celibacy)—why are the bishops always so conservative and reluctant to embrace any change?
To consecrate our nation and our world to the immaculate heart of Mary.
What I think God is asking, not just us here in Australia, but everyone else around the world is to uphold the Sacred Tradition of the Church and for the leaders to uphold the Magisterium of the Church, for the Clergy must do their responsibilities of teaching and living out Catholic orthodoxy, without compromising the Sacred Scriptures. I know that humans aren't perfect, but still, we must do our best to exercise the gift of free will to live our lives as God intended in the beginning.
Response to the Plenary Council Question:- What is God asking of us in Australia at this time? God is unchanging, what he asked of us yesterday is still the same to-day and as it will also be tomorrow. The decline in catechesis is crippling the Church's response to the explosion of moral issues and fosters the advancement of anti-Christian attitudes which are especially being encouraged by many politicians and the media. True Catholic Faith has not been taught in depth for almost fifty years which has allowed the rapid realisation of the homosexual agenda along with an anti-life and anti-family culture. Poor catechesis has resulted in most Catholics being reluctant to engage in the battle and instead remain silent especially because to speak out is seen as being politically incorrect. The lack of leadership from most of our bishops and clergy is appalling, sadly they often give the impression that their main aim is not to offend anyone and thereby remain socially acceptable.
I think God is asking the Catholic Church in Australia to truly embody the spirit of Christ's love by finally acknowledging the full equality of women. That women are not given an equal opportunity to serve their communities as priests is a blight on the excellent social justice work of the Church. No amount of reference to 'equal but called to serve differently' or citing of supposed theological or doctrinal authority can justify such blatant discrimination in the 21st century.
A more active participation of lay people in living and spreading the teachings of the Church, not by preaching but rather by their example in living thoroughly Christian lives with all the virtues inherent in the doctrine of the Church. Women would be more effective in this way providing happy homes where the children learn from their example and words how they should live in and outside their homes. Married priests should have no place in the organisation of the Church where they would be a hindrance and out of place. The place of women in society is in their homes and among their friends where by their example and concern for others they can do a wonderful apostolate. A more active participation of lay people in living and spreading the teachings of the Church, not by preaching but rather by their example in living thoroughly Christian lives with all the virtues inherent in the doctrine of the Church. Women would be more effective in this way providing happy homes where the children learn from their example and words how they should live in and outside their homes.
To re-engage young families with the Church. Families most often only know of the Church through the religious life of our Catholic schools.
To love and respect all humans. The Church must treat everyone equally as we are all made in God's image. This means people of all races, the poor, the mentally ill etc. It must also include

homosexuals as well as heterosexuals. (No-one chooses their sexuality). Women should be treated equally with men. It's not right or just to deny the majority of practising Catholics the right to be ordained priests. Tradition is not a good enough reason. Jesus had women disciples, but had to respond to the times and culture he lived in, so wisely didn't have women Apostles.

God is asking us to be kind and compassionate to one another. He is asking us to acknowledge that he is recognized in different ways by different cultures. He is asking us to look after the environment, to which we are inextricably linked. He is asking us to respect ourselves, each other and the environment. Simple.

Just as Jesus was a man of his time, fully versed and aware of the religious and socially acceptable rules and laws. OUR CHURCH MUST BE AWARE OF OUR SOCIETIES' EXPECTATIONS. Part of Jesus' mission was to change the direction of the Jewish people away from exclusivity and towards inclusivity, while at the same time maintaining the high moral and ethical standard of a God who was and is still amongst us today. We heard today in the Gospel reading that the 3 pillars of our religion are Faith, Hope and LOVE, with Love being the greatest. Involve that with the scriptural definition of Love and the path for us all is clear. Also I believe the Church has become anchored to the weak human doctrines that 2000 years of human analysis has created and often the people are torn between Church tradition and doctrine and what seem to be the contradictory messages within the New Testament. The CHURCH is ruled by doctrine, tradition that is seriously outdated and reflects back to a time when the people were illiterate and ignorant when the priest was the best educated person in the room. NOT SO NOWADAYS. The non-religious people who surround us still expect the highest of standards, which is ironic but true none the less. So while moving amongst them we still need to be part of them and not isolated. To bring the young people back we need symbols that project Faith, Hope and Love, Not Suffering, Guilt and fear. Which the crucified Christ represents. The resurrected Christ is appropriate and what I believe Jesus intended. The crucified Christ is an Easter symbol only. The foundation for the support of the 3 pillars is Truth, All things in life and the world would be better if we truly applied, "the truth will set you free" self-analysis, rejection of perceived wrong, reality checks etc. etc. The Church needs to truly self-examine and search for the real truth. We should not hide from the light, we should be truthful and really honest.

God might well be asking us to "reform" unity in His Church. Pope Francis has featured in the media recently embracing an Islamic cleric and stating that "We are all followers of the one God". We have departments and courses within Universities purportedly containing some of the finest minds in the country all mulling over the historical occurrences which brought about the diversity and division currently prevailing in God's Church. The human element in the endeavour to implement God's doctrine is conducive to this division which will prevail while theological argument procrastinates in this dilemma.

God is asking us to look at a new model of Church for Australia. The events of the past and the report from the Royal Commission have shown the whole of Australia that the Church as it has operated here during our 200 year + history has failed in many ways. There have been many positive outcomes in our local Church's history, but the negatives have weighed heavily on our reputation. In the eyes of the general population, the Church has lost its moral authority and has become irrelevant in the lives of many, both Catholics and others. There needs to be serious

consideration to issues such as married priests, female clergy and embracing former priests who have left the ministry. They could be extremely valuable in relieving the shortage of clergy, especially if they were once again allowed to preside at the celebration of our Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, while working, either full time or part time, outside of the Church during the week. Their lived experience outside of the clerical life would enable them to relate to many of the congregation who suffer the same trials and tribulations in everyday life with families and other worldly troubles. The experience of working with nuns who have been engaged in parish life shows all of us that they bring a uniquely female perspective to the issues of life and they can relate to other females especially. The majority of our congregations are female, yet so many of our women in the pews reject the male perspective portrayed by some of our current clergy. Inclusiveness was something that Jesus stressed in his day. We are still struggling with it in the Church of the 21st century. People will no longer accept that because celibate old men in Rome declare there will be no married or female clergy, it shall be so. We need the courage to reject this stand as out of touch with our current society. One shuddered today to hear a brilliant female reader proclaiming the word and having to read from the lectionary, "When I was a child, Now I am a MAN..." It speaks volumes that a Church in the 21st century has not even been able to come up with inclusive language in its readings. No wonder so many folk have turned their backs on an institution still entrenched in a male culture of centuries ago.

Be people of hope and unity. Be inclusive of the marginalized particularly. Lay leadership at decision making levels. Decision making body for the Church of Australia to include clerics, laity, women and men. Recognition that all dioceses in Australia are completely different with different pastoral needs, therefore different responses. To ensure that the formation program includes more time in parish life. Include theory and practice. That Christian Churches work collaboratively in viable ways. Create a strong awareness for care of the environment.

I think the focus should be on the People of God, the sense of the faithful, and not the clerical hierarchy. The clerical role should also be inclusive of women and married people. The role should not be seen as belonging to the elite few, but seen as a commitment to service in the community. Consideration should be given to releasing clergy from their commitment to celibacy when in the past it was the only pathway to priesthood and hence not a truly free choice. Given today's knowledge of the human psyche, one has to question the validity of making lifetime commitments. It may work for some, but for many it is a trap and may prevent the person from generously sharing their gifts should they find themselves in the position of not being able to continue with the "lifetime commitment" made in earlier life. Certainly, the community needs to do all it can to support commitments and that which is "born" of the commitment. Rather than shaming people struggling with the impacts of a destructive commitment, help should be provided and compassion so that the unwinding of the commitment enables healing and new life. Some of the Church laws are as bad as the laws promoted by the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' time on earth. Priests are forced to seek laicisation when the issue may be about celibacy and not about the call to clerical ministry. People are trapped in a marriage because one person chose to take another path, unrelated to their original intent at the time of marriage. I think the focus should be on inclusion rather than exclusion when thinking about the Eucharist and inter-communion. God is asking us to be compassionate and conciliatory, rather than divisive and

exclusive. At the last supper, I don't think Jesus was concerned about shared theological views to justify them being able to share at the table. Church needs to review its position on homosexuality and gender identity. The hierarchy appear to be trapped in a time warp defending archaic issues and institutions but not providing a useful model for assisting people to develop a fully informed conscience. The leadership needs to be more focussed on witnessing their values, standing up for social justice and the weak and defenceless. The Church seems more comfortable to align itself with the rich and elite, rather than the poor and destitute. Laity should be given a voice when suitably qualified—whether in the pulpit, newsletter or social media. While symbol and sacrament are important, dress for Mass and the clerical collar and rubrics about what a chalice can be made of need some sense of perspective. While beauty and expensive items can point to God's glory, simple items like wood and making do with what is available can just as readily proclaim God's glory and wonder.

I think God is asking us to bring people back to the Church. I think it needs to start with youths so it can build a good base for future generations. I believe in order to do this, parents and adults need to be educated further to depend their understanding of Jesus, so they can pass this information to the younger generation. A suggestion is Catholic schools should have learning sessions for parents and teach them the catechism, this will help them with teaching their children and even friends. Even Catholics should participate in RCIA, as some Catholics don't fully understand the teachings of Jesus. People need to understand the importance of going to Church weekly, it is only an hour of our time.

To grow in faith, hope, love and obedience to Christ's teaching and example. To truly value the rich heritage of the Church's two thousand years of tradition. [To value means first of all to know that heritage and secondly to be confident in ecumenical dialogue/encounter.]

BE OPEN, BE HONEST, BE DECISIVE, DO NOT PROCRASTINATE.

To remain loyal to the Church. To value our Communities. To live the Gospel and be true to the teachings of Jesus. To acknowledge our faith. Know that we as a Church have power to make changes. Be honest and demand to be heard. To inform leaders in the Church of the real needs, hurts and possibilities of the People of God. To listen attentively to the marginalised and outcasts of Society. Leaders in the Church should include WOMEN and men of faith, celibate and married, have knowledge of an up to date theology, be compassionate, honest, ethical in practice, suitable to serve in a particular position or community and be accountable!!!

* More opportunities for lay women in leadership and highest level decision making (e.g. plenary council, election of pope). * Parishioners to have say in selection of local priest, bishop, archbishop. * Women accepted into diaconate with same responsibilities as men. * Women accepted into priesthood. * Review Church governance and human resources. * Review of current parish structures/boundaries. Appropriately qualified lay people to manage 'parishes' allowing priests to concentrate on pastoral matters. * Review roles, responsibilities and pay scales of parish office staff positions ensuring clear career paths and opportunities. * Priests to have choice whether to marry or remain celibate.

<p>To reflect deeply on the Gospels and the mission of Jesus and how that may be adapted to our own time and place.</p>
<p>Anglican priests who are married. Women should be given more say in Church AFFAIRS... We should be doing more for the poor and homeless.</p>
<p>To build a Church that looks, acts and listens like Jesus; shining Love's light to the world; listening to the Spirit and working to fix the damage caused by past actions. Show real compassion and inspire others by our actions. Cut through the institutionalisation to move the Kingdom of God on earth—reignite the vision of Vatican II.</p>
<p>We are being asked to live the Gospel rather than a watered-down version of it. For example: In the recent Qld Abortion debate, there was no leadership in united prayer by the [-] archdiocese. The slogan, "Both Lives Matter", was not enough. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you came to birth I consecrated you," God said. We were encouraged to sign petitions, email politicians....but we weren't asked to pray....even when suggestions were called for by the archdiocesan office, and leadership in united prayer was pleaded for again and again by many Church-goers. United Prayer moves mountains. Young people respect Pope Francis because he speaks about injustices, involves himself in them and asks the Church to pray. They have a strong sense of social justice and see him as a true representative of Jesus. We need bishops who defend the truth as Jesus did. Parish priests are wonderful and did encourage prayer among their parishioners; a bishop can reach out to so many more.</p>
<p>To re write 'the story' appropriate to this era. Church language, terminology and concepts are as meaningful as a foreign language. Take the Nicene creed for a simple example: Jesus is an historical person, and as such did NOT exist before creation, so to introduce him as such in the creed is logically incorrect. Firstly we should acknowledge the second person of the Trinity as existing equally with the Father. And only 'introduce' the historical person known of Jesus as we acknowledge that he was made 'incarnate by the Holy Spirit'.</p>
<p>That the Catholic schools of Australia are more united in the Religious education they teach and stick to the perennial teachings of the Magisterium of the Church. Especially in matters of: the existence of sin and the importance of repentance through the sacrament of Confession, human sexuality, ethics and morals at work, the importance of Holy Mass and the treasure of the Eucharist.</p>
<p>To be kind, gentle and accepting towards one another.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to be inclusive of all and tolerant. I think he wants us to show compassion and live in his footsteps.</p>
<p>Biggest Priority: Everyone needs to feel welcome—genders, nationalities, sexual orientation and age Women’s roles in the Church need to be expanded—they need positions of power and equality in roles such as female priests. The Church needs to accept gay rights. The Church should acknowledge their failures/past mistakes and be clear about how they will improve the future. Others: We need to regain our safe/trustworthy reputation. We need to focus more on positive teaching not the negatives e.g. sin = go to Hell. Communion should be open to all Christians. Lay people should become more involved and take charge. Church to remain a place of worship. We</p>

should see people going to Church for the right reasons. Church should be more welcoming and have a better sense of community. Church should continue its focus on care for the environment.

I think God is asking us to take a serious look at two major issues: (1) Why is it that my generation (older years) are still steadfast in their faith while the younger ones (who are no less decent people) appear to have drifted away. (2) The Church seems to have overlooked the very human nature of our priests. I pray that one day priests (if they so choose) may be able to do God's work with the help of a married partner. Remaining celibate seems to place our married state in an inferior position.

A Catholic used to be recognized by his/her obedience to the Pope; devotion to Our Lady and the Saints; adoration of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Over the past 50 years these unchangeable Gifts to The Church have been eroded and played down in order to strive for common ground with Protestants. Saint John Paul the Great made it clear that ecumenism must be based on Truth. Of course. Water down beliefs is falsehood. It is gross error. I make the suggestion that The Church in Australia, in Queensland, get back to these prime beliefs and cease deception. The fact that we have lost generations of people to The Church during this period of watering-down, surely MUST prompt us to get back to reality. The greatest Council of The Church of all time, Vatican Council II, encouraged ecumenism but it also confirmed the Teachings of The Church. My compliments.

To become a Church renewed by the Gospel, a listening Church, a humble Church, a Church where the poor and disadvantaged remain the focus. A Church therefore where Social Justice is at its very heart. A Church where the past is valued and learned from but not what dictates our future. A Church that is welcoming, not one where one is told at a funeral ... don't come to the altar if you are divorced! A Church not ruled by clericalism. Time for our bishops to get rid of all their princely symbols and regalia. A Church open to explore the issue of married clergy. A Church that welcomes sinners. A Church willing to think creatively and outside the square. A prayerful Church ready and open to be led by the Spirit. A Church that is able to embrace a broad experience of worship.

Hi, A suggestion on a way forward on re-establishing Catholics to engage with Church ... and vice versa. I believe we need to seriously consider having a Seminarian spend 1 day per week physically within a school environment each and every week of a school term throughout every year of their training ... their task being to engage with the children and potentially their families. Historically over the last several hundred years has been the religious orders of Sisters and Brothers who have been the real power behind 'motivating' Catholic parents and their children to attend Mass and other Church related events on a regular basis and undertaking the building of strongly community engagement. Now we need a new identifiable religious group to re-establish/re-build the Church ... and seminarian (or otherwise it would need to be Deacons ... or otherwise then it would need to be voluntary/paid parish pastoral assistants, etc.) to step up/into this role (which is much more and much beyond the role currently undertaken by school based APRE teachers) ... If this is not urgently implemented then by the time current Seminarians are ordained as priests they might be preaching to a much smaller audience or in some cases no audience ... If you don't take this approach then you must unburden the local parish priest of some of their current workload so that they do have the time to spend 1 day per week physically

within each and every school within their parish each and every week of a school term ... and many of their other days physically visiting people in their home/on the streets ... and also building up an active social works profile within their local community ... the religious must step out and daily live most of their time well away from Church building/Church bureaucracy. The Church need to do this to remain relevant and connected to ever physical disengaging society...the role of every religious order/priest/bishop must constantly proactively evolve/adapt and change 'through and with the times' that they are living through...

Love, responsibility, inclusion of youth people, loyalty, obey, action, living faith, commitment, mercy of those in need and vulnerable, values, to be example of Jesus, acknowledge of our faith, Christian education, evangelizing through the testimony of life, serve with love, pray for those who think differently from us without judging them.

I think God is asking for a more dedicated, active and concerned clergy, fostering e.g. the saying of the rosary, the Way of the Cross, and more importantly, regular attendance to the sacraments particularly Mass and Confession. Mass should be said with the due solemnity with which it has always been honoured. Priests should respect age-old tradition in this way and avoid interpolating with their own gimmicks which could be irreverent and could reduce the piety of the congregation. Priests need to speak clearly about the gravity of sin—what it is—a serious offence against a loving God—and point out the sinfulness of matters of sex which are so casually spoken about in society and in the press and are considered 'natural' and therefore completely permissible subjects for open discussion. Priests should live exemplary lives—they have special graces to do so—and help to reinstate the sacrament of Holy Orders particularly in view of the sad conduct of so many clergy who should have been leaders of holiness.

Please stop all this focus on social justice, the environment and accompanying we people in our sin. Justice is a virtue and all justice is social. In fact go back to teaching the Virtues and seven deadly sins. Jesus "encountered" the sinner, he never "accompanied" them in their sinful lifestyle. He met them with love, offered forgiveness and told them to "go sin no more." Today all we hear is the Church "Accompanying us in our questionable lifestyles". God does not change and His Message of Salvation has not changed so please stick to the Mission Jesus gave His Apostles, "baptise them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teach them and make disciples of them". People today have lost the sense of sin because our Shepherds do not teach us.

I believe that God is asking our Church to reimage itself. Through the people of God, not just the Clergy, we need to ensure that our Catholic faith is one of action. Unfortunately, our Church has lost its way and no longer connects with the majority of Catholics. This is clearly evidenced in Mass attendance. However, through Catholic schools our faith has a way forward. Our Catholic schools are thriving despite the impact of the Royal Commission and obstacles placed in their paths. Our Catholic schools are showing the clerical Church the way—reconceptualising our faith to reach today's society. Clericalism has no place in today's Church and people are speaking with their feet. They come to our schools, not our Churches, for an authentic experience of faith. By investing in schools, our Church has a way forward. Unfortunately, there are too many clerics who believe that our Catholic schools are burden on the Church or worse, a 'cash cow' for parishes. A new model needs to be developed where parish priests and administrators provide pastoral

support for schools but have no governance responsibilities. By doing this, our Church will allow our schools to truly thrive and be the place of faith that they need to be for our communities. God is not asking us to go back to 'the good old days' because 'the good old days' failed. The majority of Catholics raised in the 70's and 80's are no longer part of the formal Church, but do send their children to our schools. They no longer adhere to many Catholic teachings that are seen as out of touch with society, especially in areas of family, marriage and sexual identity. However, the majority are still Catholic and wish to re-engage. At present, they are doing this through our schools. God is asking our Church to listen to the laity that are crying out for a clerical Church that listens, acts and accepts the modern world. Our Gospel transcends canon law and clericalism. It is about looking after the Last, Least and Lost of our society, making meaning of the Gospel in today's world and reconceptualising the central message of love for today's generation. Our schools already have the model and our God is seeking our Churches to follow. The challenge is for Church leaders to recognise the deep faith and expertise of our educators and accept that they are just as committed as they are. By working together, our Church can again become a place where people take an active role. That is what God is asking and the plenary council needs to deliver.

Topic: Church Renewal—Church focussed on Salvation. What we recommend:

- The Church needs to understand families and individuals in all their complexity.
- The role of conscience is paramount in moral decision making.
- Divorced and remarried Catholics need to be more fully integrated into the Church.
- All members of the family need to be encouraged to live good Christian lives.
- We should no longer talk about people “living in sin”. People in non-traditional families, like unwed mothers, need to be offered “understanding, comfort and acceptance”. When it comes to people in these situations the Church need to stop applying moral laws.
- Traditional teachings on marriage are affirmed, but the Church should not burden people with unrealistic expectations. While marriage is between one man and one woman and is indissoluble; and same-sex marriage is not considered marriage. The Church continues to hold out an invitation to healthy marriages. At the same time, the Church has often foisted upon people an “artificial theological ideal of marriage” removed from people’s everyday lives. Seminarians and priests need to be better trained to understand the complexities of people’s married lives. “Ordained ministers often lack the training needed to deal with the complex problems currently facing families”.
- Gay men and women should be respected. While same-sex marriage is not permitted, the Pope says that he wants to reaffirm “before all else” that the homosexual person needs to be “respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, and ‘every sign of unjust discrimination’ is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression or violence.” Families with LGBT members need “respectful pastoral guidance” from the Church and its pastors so that gays and lesbians can fully carry out God’s will in their lives.
- All are welcome. The Church must help families of every sort, and people in every state of life, knowing that, even in their imperfections, they are loved by God and can help others experience that love. Priest must work to make people feel welcome in the Church. “Amoris Laetitia” offers the vision of a pastoral and merciful Church that encourages people to experience the “joy of love”.

Topic: Church Renewal—Review of Governance and Church Human Resources. What we recommend:

- Review how parishes are currently run and look to implementing new models of leadership. The question must be asked: Is the current parish model still the best model to take us forward? We suggest a model of governance and leadership where laity manage the corporate functions, leaving the priest to concentrate on pastoral functions. Laity must be equal partners in any renewed Church. With the increasing reduction in Church attendees, if change doesn't happen in this space, the current funding model will soon not cover costs.
- Adopt the Adelaide model where it can be implemented, it includes women as episcopal vicars and has been found to work well. The royal commission found the Australian Catholic diocese with one of the lowest child sexual abuse rates over six decades from 1950—Adelaide, at 2.4 per cent—pioneered the appointment of lay women and nuns as episcopal vicars with authority over priests. “There was a significant cultural difference in that diocese from every other diocese in Australia,” Australian Catholic University Professor Neil Ormerod told the Royal Commission.
- Another model could include formed and educated married couples or Lay Ecclesial Ministers.
- Review roles, responsibilities and pay scales of parish staff positions e.g. parish Pastoral Coordinator to ensure clear career paths exist to fully utilise skills developed through formation studies, training programmes and experience. It may be argued that there are some career paths already however, it seems that career paths within diocese and parishes are confusing and mostly male dominated e.g. Pastoral Activity Co-ordinator, Pastoral Associate, Pastoral Director, Deacon etc.
- Clericalism in all its forms should be rejected. Any restoration of public trust in the Churches will be dependent on a commitment to contemporary ethical standards of good governance based on the principles of transparency, accountability and inclusivity. There can be no theological excuse for poor governance structures and practices.

Topic: Church Renewal—Equal role for Catholic Women in decision-making. What we recommend:

- A significant amount of money has always been spent on formation of men within the Catholic Church (not all with expected outcomes). So, make significant funding available to develop formation studies and other formal training programmes specifically for women, especially in the area of spirituality which is currently seen as the sole domain of priests.
- Scholarships should be offered so that cost is not a barrier to women wanting to take up positions in lay pastoral ministry.
- Implement a mentoring programme for women to include mentors from within and outside the Church.
- Review roles, responsibilities and pay levels of parish staff positions (within a ‘family friendly’ working environment for all) e.g. Parish Pastoral Coordinator to ensure clear career paths exist to fully utilise skills developed through formation studies, training programmes and experience. It may be argued that there are some career paths already, however, it seems that career paths within diocese and parishes are confusing and mostly male dominated e.g. Pastoral Activity Co-ordinator, Pastoral Associate, Pastoral Director, Deacon etc.
- Ensure inclusiveness in gender language. We are all aware that language is very powerful. Language reflects the world it's used in, but it's also active in maintaining or redesigning that world. It can be a tool of discrimination or one of empowerment. We can use it to foster sexism, even unintentionally, or we can use it to help make a fairer world. A renewed Church needs to ensure inclusiveness in gender language with masculine-oriented language eliminated as far as

can be done without altering meaning of texts from ancient patriarchal cultures. The danger of not doing this would be to alienate young girls and young women who enjoy equity in all other areas of their lives. • Our [-] diocese needs to adequately resource Office for the Participation of Women and actively promote it in the same way other mission is promoted. • Finally, opportunities need to be widely promoted and women actively encouraged so apply for leadership positions.

To stop making assumptions and listen to the wisdom of the faithful who are asking: 1. for formation about the Catholic faith and ready access to clear information, e.g. on what the Church believes and teaches about IVF, surrogacy, hell, purgatory, etc. 2. for a program to help us understand the Mass and its parts (Why we do what we do) and other sacraments like Anointing (What is it? When should it happen? Who receives it?). 3. for SERIOUS formation for parents wanting their children to be baptised, confirmed. 4. for the Mass to be in Australian English that they can understand. 5. for a lectionary translation that is inspiring, understandable and uses inclusive language. 6. for the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation to be permitted in parishes. 7. how we can stop multiple, long, boring eulogies at funerals (that put people off attending) without seeming to be insensitive. Perhaps parishes could offer to host a Vigil the night before with food and drink where people can tell stories and show photos. 8. that every parish have to have a proper, functioning liturgy committee with a mix of lay and ordained people who know about liturgy and ensure good liturgy practice. 9. that every diocese must have a liturgy committee to help parishes ensure good liturgy practice. 10. that PPs study and follow the RCIA instead of doing their own thing because the RCIA is 'too much trouble'. 11. that we look at how admin jobs can be done by others to free priests up to concentrate on their core roles of presiding at liturgy, doing pastoral work and attending on-going in-service.

To become a simple gospel based community, being fed by contemplative prayer and focused on practical loving in an inclusive way.

I believe in God but I think that, as an Institution, the Catholic Church hasn't always make Jesus' ideas easy to understand. It is time for members of the Clergy to walk the talk. Many don't. It is time to move away from an old fashioned Church where 'old and grumpy white men' rule. It is time to make Mass interesting and relevant to today's world. People DO seek guidance. We need to be inclusive: All welcome as long as everyone wants to share Jesus's idea: love, compassion and forgiveness. Why can't women say Mass? 'Deaconess'?

I think God is asking us:

- to be able to listen to one another with humble and open hearts,
- 'do' Church better (come back to the focus of building God's Kingdom, not our own),
- to have better supervision structures in our Church (particularly for those in leadership like parish priests and bishops),
- to notice the poor and the marginalised in our midst, and be seen to be making a real difference in their lives,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to create a home grown / truly Australian Catholic Church, where the stories of our First Australians, and their spirituality around the Dreamtime, are explored, brought to life, and celebrated in the events, liturgy and prayer life of our Church, - for the Church of the future to be less about 'us', less about the needs of middle/wealthy human beings, and more about God's holistic plan for all of creation, - for a return to prayer, - for an openness to discover new ways to pray as a corporate group, - for more funding to be made available and to go into creating ministry roles in parishes, particularly for lay men and women.
<p>God is asking of us in Australia for new leadership within the Catholic Church. Currently the leaders within the Catholic Church are still the same ones that oversaw the Church while children were being sexually abused. Nothing will change until these leaders step down and others with higher moral values take their place.</p>
<p>To be a welcoming Church and more proactive in voicing views. I feel we need to discern where God wants us to be active through the Holy Spirit and then allow the Spirit to influence through our actions. I feel we need to be more tolerant but less indifferent.</p>
<p>To be compassionate towards refugees, especially those in detention. To be more proactive in defending them from harsh government policies.</p>
<p>The Church to provide a clearer path. Address all issues honestly and publicly and deal with them quickly.</p>
<p>At this present time, I believe that God is asking us in Australia to always carry His Word with us; wherever we go, whoever we are in the company of and in whatever sort of situation or circumstance we find ourselves in. I believe He is asking us to make every effort to etch His Word on our hearts, souls and minds, and additionally when we do this as individuals, this would surely encourage others of our great nation to do likewise. I also believe God is asking us to always be welcoming and responsive to new believers, believers who have managed to find their way back to the Church and to be a Godly and positive example for others in our community and abroad.</p>
<p>For all Catholics in Australia to have an absolute and dedicated faith and love of God. We have in to many cases drifted into just going to Mass and keeping the commandments and I think God wants a lot more from us.</p>
<p>Conscious living, Slow our lives down and be present, Open our hearts and help refugees, Help those all around us that are in need.</p>
<p>To assemble a set of proposals concerning desirable changes for the Catholic Church in Australia.</p>
<p>He is asking us to look around at the empty seats at Mass and find a way to fill them again.</p>
<p>1. To listen to and engage with the laity in this modern 21st century: We know that God is asking of, the laity, to become more active Christians and to actively involve ourselves in the missionary role of the Church—to evangelise. However, if the Catholic Church of today is to grow into the 21st century instead of slip into further decline, the laity and especially women must be more</p>

integrally involved in the everyday life of the Church. This means being given leadership and decision-making roles, not merely advisory ones. Parish councils/finance committees should not just play an advisory role. Women should not be only seen as parish assistants or tea-making ladies. We should be looking to women to be actively involved in decision making roles in the formal Church. We pointedly note that, in this plenary council, women will have no role in the decision-making! This is a serious problem in looking to making decisions on the future of a Church that seeks to serve all peoples. 2. To reclaim the trust of the disaffected, the hurt and the wronged: We need to be a humble Church, acknowledging past faults and seeking to return to our true mission: 'To love one another, as God has loved us". Our actions, as a Church, need to reflect this mission. 3. To seek to serve the community as it has done so well in the past through its charitable works; 4. To look outward, not inward—e.g. the focus and time devoted to the liturgical correctness of the wordings in the Mass, to which hymns are allowable within the Mass etc. while all around us, people are drifting away from the Church. These changes have, we have generally observed, led to dis-affection and alienation by the faithful and further disconnect by the wavering. We find ourselves remaining as active Catholics, in spite of these changes, not because of them. The Church leaders should be more focussed on the people they serve than the inward-looking focus on liturgical correctness. Where once we recited the Apostles Creed or the Gloria by heart, we now need to read the new-format words from printed sources. The adherence to liturgical correctness of the words has taken away the ability to naturally pray these prayers. 5. To attract and engage youth, young adults, young families, our parish school families in parish life; This can only be done by becoming a welcoming Church. Our Church celebrations should be uplifting, full of energy and life, rather than compliance to strict liturgical correctness imposed from our leaders. Only in that way will we become a welcoming Church.

I think that God is asking us to come back to the values which the elder generation held during their schooling and youth years. We were taught to respect the Divine presence in the church, to use our time in church to be very aware of His presence there, to be mindful of others who are trying to do that, to limit talk with others to outside His house. To control distractions like loud children to outside. We don't seem to be aware of the Presence of God in church. How can our children learn to respect the Presence in Church if we treat it like a community hall? I believe He wants us to receive the sacraments as propriety to the Clergy doing other activities so they are available to local parishioners. I think we must not promote political problems which are divisive to parishioners such as climate and mining, leave this to politicians, let's rather discuss Christian values e.g. against abortion, and assisted dying, and our opposition to the promotion of animals equal to humans.

GOD is asking us to live in faith and lead as an example to the next generation. Pray for Holy Spirit to come among us and lead us. Develop young people to pray with faith, pray for anointing of Holy Spirit, pray for peace, to announce God's word and to testify the miracle of the Lord. Church, Catholic schools, community, parents should encourage, teach, and lead the youngsters towards Jesus.

Not to be discouraged, to have faith, to still live by our Christian values regardless of the turmoil and issues of the current Church. Still have courage to defend our Church when being criticized by others.

To be more inclusive of the LGBT community and the divorced. For women to have more roles within the Church and to give the opportunity to married people to be priests. Also some changes in the Mass to make it more appealing to children and young people.

To use men and women within the Church ministry to support the clergy, especially with a shortage of vocations. This would mean training lay people or religious to take on many of the duties normally carried by the priest. Married or single Deacons, [women and men]. Managers to look after the administration of the parish or combined parishes. Freeing the priest to concentrate on his sacramental duties. All lay people must be suitably trained.

God is calling us to change. And change is painful, for an individual and for an organisation, now our Church needs to change. Be less concerned with rules and regulation, put the person first and show them love and compassion.

He is asking us to try new things, be accepting of all people, be there for each other, be open to change, welcoming to all, go out to people, serve. We need to go and be with the people, not just in times of tragedy and devastation but in regular times, e.g. Mass on the beach, park, etc. Let's make it as inclusive as possible, for some people I think it is too scary and overwhelming (not knowing the right words, when to sit or stand). Let's make it relevant and accessible to all! The internet and social media impact our situation also. We need to utilise this too, during Mass and wherever else, but I also believe it creates standards (good and bad perhaps). For example school students and any other student or person going to a class, lecture, personal development seminar etc. all expect to feel inspired, motivated, challenged, etc. We all derive this differently through our senses, we need to consider all of these things during Mass and other times. I also believe music is a crucial element to our Masses. We need people to come to Mass and feel inspired and motivated, valued and accepted and wanting to come back again and again. I have heard some people/families say that they don't have time, Sunday morning is their only sleep in, etc., however if their needs are being met at Mass they won't have the attitude that, that was an hour of their life that they're never going to get back. We need to gather people to be involved. Perhaps we need a scaffold/curriculum (music ideas, internet clips, craft (to do) activities, social /ice breaker activities, etc. etc. to follow but have room to move and tailor it to our own parish needs. Some parishes may need more guidance/support than others. We need educators (groups) to go out and teach parishes about how to do it, how to develop suitable programs for their own People.

There are many things God is asking of us! 1. More women be involved at leadership level. 2. Women be ordained priests. 3. Priests who have left the priesthood and married be practicing priests again. 4. The hierarchy stay out of sexuality issues. 5. Divorced people be welcomed and allowed to receive the sacraments. 6. Third rite of reconciliation be allowed. 7. No children left alone with a priest—ever. 7. That lay people have a say in the election of a bishop and of a cardinal. 8. That the Australian vernacular is used in the Missal. Let Australian people decide the Mass language not Rome. 9. That more adult education be offered at parish level. 10. The Church refrains from proclaiming to be powerful, autocratic and infallible attitudes. 11. That Clericalism be stamped out! 12. That the Church leads by example (e.g. Ted Kennedy) and allow refugees and homeless live in the Church property. 13. That training for the priesthood be like other people

<p>who go to university and live in the community. 14. The Church move from being an institution and become a service in Jesus' example.</p>
<p>I think God wants us to go back to the basics of bringing His good news to everyone and return to be a humble Church without all the rules, pomp and ceremony we now have. I want the Church to become one that I am not embarrassed or ashamed to belong to.</p>
<p>I am truly optimistic that this process and the national dialogue will not only address institutional issues in the operations of our Church but will also be a catalyst for the Australian Church to realign its focus on the message of Jesus—love, inclusion and mission. It is clear that the leadership model of the Church is not only dysfunctional but also as highlighted in the Child Abuse Royal Commission, partially corrupt. Our Church is in need of healing. The horror of the clerical child sexual abuse is but only one obvious symptom. I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time to reconnect to the essence of Vatican II. Since the 80s under the influence of a conservative fundamentalism we have retreated back into Churches hiding behind our rules, liturgies and a shameful national silence in relation to humanitarian and social justice issues. Let us re-open the windows and become a welcoming Church, a less clerical Church, an inclusive Church, a caring Church ready to advocate/serve/care for the marginalised and disadvantage. We can do this by adopting a shared leadership model—parish Pastoral Council—with women and men in leadership roles. Canon Law to be abolished and organisation principles/regulations adopted that enable the Church to be transparent and accountability. The role of priest to be enlarged to included married folks both men and women. Listening must be a key component of any reform.</p>
<p>1. A renaissance in the Church. A rebirth in the Church to return to the central messages of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels; to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire all people who live in Australia to return to the faith. 2. Re-interpretation of the faith, to be relevant to today. 3. An open, listening Church, not one that displays an attitude of arrogance and retreats to dogma whenever it is challenged.</p>
<p>Tolerance.</p>
<p>To act in aims of social justice with time and energy, not monetary values.</p>
<p>To be tolerant of all races, cultures and to assist the needy and marginalised.</p>
<p>To reflect on the past... To be open to chance and look at how to inspire young people. To love and to be MORE INCLUSIVE of all who want to be part of the Church family.</p>
<p>Live Humbly, Live in Harmony, To be a leader (as individuals, a country and society in the Global world) to move the Catholic Church and its followers into the modern world.</p>
<p>To look after the students that can't look after themselves. To support those who are attempting to make things better. To be open minded in every situation where a student confides in you. To provide an education that, at its core, teaches students how they should act and treat others.</p>
<p>God is asking us to think critically, especially when it comes to the rise of extreme politics that endorses ideas of hate and exclusion. God is asking us to love the marginalised and empower the downtrodden. God is asking us to be humble and stray from the path of indulgence when it comes to Mass consumerism and narcissism.</p>

To be compassionate, understanding, kind and supportive to all Australians. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in our endeavours and misfortunes.
I think God is asking us to let our yes be yes and our no be no—we need to be more authentic and righteous in our action. This relies on greater understanding of Church teaching—what do we do and why do we do it? What does the Church believe? Do people really belong?
To help change the increasing statistics of 'no-religion', which is continually increasing. To focus on reducing the unemployment rates and homeless rates. Remember that the core of the Catholic Social Teachings is dignity of the human person in all that we do.
Model gospel values.
I think that God is asking us 'As the Church' to move forward with the times. I believe that God is asking us to be 'accepting' and 'forgiving' of all people (Women in the Church, those who are divorce, those who are not baptised, LGBTI Community).
The Church is asking us to continue the mission of Jesus. God is asking us to assist those who are less fortunate. To evangelise the youth and to be agents of change via the use of the Catholic Social Teaching Principles.
To forgive and forget about the sins of past priests, clergy (brothers and nuns). The Catholic Church needs to own the responsibility and be accountable for their actions.
Acceptance, inclusion, tolerance, help those in need, world peace, use actions not just words, be kind.
To act with honesty and acknowledge the errors of the past. Reflect on situations with forgiveness and compassion.
Trying to analyse something as wrong or right causes dissension. Being kind to every individual you communicate with will result in you being right every time.
To be more inclusive; tradition is importance but the key of our faith is to love our neighbour. I would like us to be more open to those who don't have a voice; women, refugees, LGBTI, prisoners.
Acceptance of difference. Tolerance of race, creed, religion and sexuality. Engagement of youth in the Catholic Church and listening to why they are disengaged. Consideration of marginalised—reaching out to others. Change needed in schools—curriculum, lay teachers, clergy.
Better place for you and for me, kindness, forgiveness, happiness, inclusion, humanity, actions speak louder than words.
Inclusivity. Reaching out to and including young people (children, teenagers and young adults) in a way that is relevant, inclusive and engaging to their formation. Role of women needs to be more visible and real in the Church community and Church leadership and advisory.
Prioritise sustainability. To come together without division. Come together as one. Show respect for ALL regardless of differences. People of faith and those who represent the Church take

responsibility for recognising cultural change and how best to reach out to society and move forward. How can we spread the word of the Lord with it being embraced?
To continue instilling and practicing the 7 Catholic sacraments. To continue with the Catholic traditional prayers, e.g. rosary, Our Father, the creed etc. To allow priests to marry and have woman priests. More evangelising to Youth, change old methods to more modern ones. See what the other Christian denominations are doing using. To listen more to what the people want...
Tolerance, respect and acceptance of all. To care for the environment as Stewards of the Earth. To modernise the Church to cater for all.
How do we make the Church more relevant in the 21st century in Australia? Are we able to prepare a way forward for the next 100 years?
To be accepting of those who are different than ourselves. To offer unwavering support, understanding and empathetic conversation to all. Especially for those who have different opinions and thoughts than ourselves.
I think it is asking us to be very open to women in the Church. Not just to have them in small roles but in the total organisation of our Church. We need to train the priest and Clergy to be open to the women and not to celebrate when they resign from the parish. It is not a celebration. Society is getting beyond this. Also we need to have married priest. It has and does work in the Church.
We need more women in leadership and advising roles. If possible it would be nice to see women deacons. A group / committee should be created in each diocese for the bishop to consult with.
I believe that God is asking us to be more participatory in all aspects of our Christian commitment—in parish life, in supporting each other, in supporting our priests, and in caring for our world. He wants us to discern our values and hold onto and model those values to others. He wants us to do this in a non-judgemental way that is accepting of other people's situations, cultures and values. With this Plenary Council we have begun to listen to each other's stories about our experiences of Church. Let us also be open to listen to all our brothers and sisters with kindness and understanding.
Below are listed the issues that surfaced during seven consultation gatherings within the [-] Parish Community ([-], [-]). Each issue is further expanded in the supplementary material provided later in this submission. Please refer to this addendum. ISSUE #1: LEADERSHIP OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA ü Who is called to leadership and ministry? ü The problem of clericalism. ü The rightful role of laity in the Church. ü Inclusive roles for women in the Church. ü Accountability of leaders to the community they serve. ISSUE #2: NURTURING GOD'S PEOPLE ü Confront the problem of sexual abuse within our Church.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">ü Nurture the prayer life of the people of God.ü Respond actively to the challenge of evangelisation in today's world.ü Revitalise parishes.
Acceptance of differences, treat others as you want to be treated, accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, protect our vulnerable and marginalised, be faithful to the Gospel, practice stewardship of our environment, practice forgiveness.
To be patient with the way the world is changing. To help those who are struggling to find their place in the world. Especially those who are struggling with mental health, stress, anxiety, depression. The LGBT community and those that have completely disengaged and disheartened with religion in general.
To always act fairly and justly.
I think that God is asking us to live as Christians—that is, to show our colleagues, peers, friends etc. the joy that we as Christians have in life thanks to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I don't think this necessarily has to be in an outspoken and obvious way, but in our daily lives, struggles etc. that we have someone greater than ourselves to lean on and help us. I think that God is also asking of us to be real. Not to parade a facade of holiness and religiosity that comes across as disingenuous, but to have real conversations with people, and speak out about our beliefs as Christians in a real and empathetic/sympathetic way. I think we are also asked to speak out and maintain our beliefs in the wider community. In this, we have the opportunity to educate and dialogue; however, this must be done without judgement of others beliefs and actions, remembering that we are all sinners and we are no better than anyone else. We cannot force others to convert. Our core values and beliefs should not be shaken by the current trends going on—i.e. same sex marriage, gender transition etc. These issues should strengthen our belief system. I think that if the Church were to make concessions for celibacy of priests, allowing same sex marriages to be carried out in Churches, or by priests, allowing females to become priests etc., that this would decimate the foundations of Catholic values. Personally, I would lose faith that an institution that has stood firm for 2000+ years would change these things in the wake of trends. Ultimately, we should lead by example and be real people—of course, we are sinners, but we have experienced the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We should welcome everyone, with an aim to forgive and educate. Rather than judge and push people away while standing by strongly to our core values.
We believe that we, clergy and laity, need to be acting out of spiritual poverty rather than conscious humanistic control and thus believing that God is able to bring order out of chaos; That we all repent as in the time of Nineveh forgiving one another, including ourselves after appropriate being contrite; That we acknowledge our need of God and surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit; That we live in authentic daily communion with God and others based on prayer, the Word and servant ministry; That our joy in the Lord is readily communicated to others within and outside our Church; That we be a welcoming community in word, action and deed, at home, at work and at worship.

God is asking us to challenge the Church leaders of our time so that they will become willing to recognize that our Church is The People of God, not just the hierarchy, and that each of us shares in the Wisdom of God. At present our Church is completely male dominated, suffering so much from the abuse of power. For example at this Plenary Council the bishops will be the only ones who will vote. All others involved are purely spectators who are able to give suggestions only to the Council. The Power resides in the bishops alone. This is intolerable. The very ones who were in a position to prevent much of the abuse of children over the past years, but didn't because they were more concerned about the reputation of the Church and of themselves, are the ones who will be the only voters at the Plenary Council.

To become more environmentally conscious as stewards of the earth. To become a more significant presence on Social media across all age groups. To be engaged in social justice initiatives within the school context and beyond. To actively be discerning in terms of the accuracy of knowledge that appears on internet articles.

We need to find ways to be welcoming, accommodating and helpful to children. How do children worship best? Australia is the land of the Holy Spirit. We need to shine our light and be models for the Catholics of the World. We need to lead in every aspect of our Faith and show the way.

God is asking us to remember that we are the Church. We are destined to be followers of the teaching of Jesus, not simply followers of "Church" rules and believers in her doctrines.

Let's reintroduce Catholic catechism in our Catholic schools and church meetings. Unless we get the basics right, we cannot move forward. Most of us do not understand the dynamics of the Catholic faith—as a result they are not really interested in what goes on in the Catholic Church. Most people I work with have left the Church because they just do not understand basic Catholic Catechism and things like what is the Mass, what is Confession and why should we go these sacraments etc. So having an electronic website where perhaps there is an online chat, providing instant feedback to people, having Catholic catechism classes in Catholic schools or as after Mass sessions in Catholic parishes may assist in moving forward in these situations. We need to spread the role of Our Blessed Mother in our faith—talks on the Devotion to the Rosary ,recitation of the Rosary in families, in schools and the meaning of the Rosary in our lives should be discussed at all levels of our community. Let's also introduce Bible Study groups at all levels—amongst families, parishes, schools and others. Most of us Catholics do not know anything about the Bible except for the readings they hear at Mass. We need to talk about the Word of GOD and spend time meditating on it. And lastly let's drive harder in bringing in those that have lost the faith and ask the Holy Spirit to guide as all in our journey.

I think God is asking us to be more welcoming and open to all people and not just say we are. To married, divorced, LGTB, former priests and religious, the poor and marginalised should all be welcome in our Church. Not everyone can come to communion, except for you, you and you. I have even heard a priest in [-] say that only those who have recently been to confession can come to communion at a FUNERAL. Which I thought was disgusting.

We need to be authentic and seriously address the inequality between women and men re: ordination and Church Leadership. None of the disciples were ordained priests—this evolved and there is strong evidence that women were integral to leadership in the Church. Mary Magdalene

is a case in point. Married clergy is another issue that needs addressing. We have wonderful married men and women who would make great ordained ministers. Church leadership and ministry need to be more inclusive.

Be Open to Change, Consider Female and Married priests, Review Catholic Education, Reach Out to Young People, Love One Another, Read the Bible, Learn lessons from the Bible.

The same message Jesus gave us when he walked on this earth: Love One Another. The tougher question is how do we go about this?

I think that the Church at the present, which is asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance should first REPENT of a past time in the 1980's and 1990's when the bishops at that time put a clamp on the Holy Spirit and did not approve of the Charismatic Movement and acknowledge their reluctance to allow the Holy Spirit to flow through the Charismatic Movement. They did not approve of it and a lot of people would not go because they said "The bishop does not approve of this." Imagine not approving of the Holy Spirit! Then the Church can move forward in the Holy Spirit's guidance which is very much needed. It is great to see that the bishops are NOW asking for the Holy Spirit's direction in moving on in the Catholic Church.

We need to bring the youth back into the Church. Too many seem to be leaving. I would also like to see everyone in the Church doing Bible study. We do a thing called SOAP. Scripture, Observation, Application and Pray. I feel we can grow so much more in God's love when we learn about him.

I have a wife and two children and I love my wife and express my love for her physically with love as the intent. I would like to see the Catholic Church include homosexuals. I feel that homosexuals are a part of God's plan, and they make up a portion of the natural environment. To go against that, in my mind, would be to go against God's plan. My interpretation of the story of Sodom was that sexual gratification was indulged in, and the love was not there. It is a slippery slope to pushing boundaries, in an attempt to continue to satisfy sexual gratifications. I believe a homosexual loving relationship makes God as happy as a heterosexual loving relationship. I believe it would transform the way a large proportion of society looks at the Catholic Church. It would bring more people to Church and allow God's message to influence more people.

I believe God is asking the Church in Australia to proclaim the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus Christ and to bring people to an encounter with Him. Whether in parishes, schools or Catholic ministries, our primary goal should be to bring people to the knowledge of Jesus' saving power, to an encounter with Him and ultimately the choice whether to follow and serve Him or not. Too often we get distracted by other goals, which are good but are ultimately peripheral to our ultimate goal, Jesus Christ himself. Subsequently, we have a majority of parishioners, students and ministry clients and patrons, who do not enjoy the freedom and joy that comes from a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

To whom this letter may concern. REVIVING OUR CHURCH. To quote a stanza in our Plenary Council 2020 Prayer "Give us ears to listen humbly to each other and a discerning heart to hear what you are saying". 1. That our current and future priests be re-educated to be "Of the people", to be part of the community. Capable of sharing our feelings, our hearts, our daily lives. 2. That

priests who have left their vocation be invited back with their partners to be an integral part of our Church. 3. To return to former days when married priests were the norm. 4. To recognise that today, the women of our Church are the backbone of our Church and therefore should and MUST be invited to be priests. To be officially part of the leadership of our Church. 5. That our teachers in our Catholic schools be truly committed Christians. Role models to our children. 6. That our school children play an integral role in Church life. Parishes must interact and make connections with the schools. 7. That there be a return to our schools preparing our children for their sacraments. Ensuring a more meaningful and educational experience and at an age they understand. 8. A return to the Third Rite of Reconciliation. 9. A more welcoming and better understanding on the effect of divorce, particularly to the innocent party. I pray that you please, please listen and hear us and act now. Regards [-] Chairman Finance Committee [-] parishioner 50+ years

I think God is asking us to recall the truth of our filial adoption in Christ. Now is not the time to "go missing," nor "retreat." My sense is that now, perhaps more than ever, we need to remember that "filial adoption" is a grace, a sublime gift, "... one is not born as a Christian, but one becomes a Christian" (Apol., 18, 5).

We both attended Catholic schools and were taught Religion including all of the sacraments by Christian brothers and Nuns—our Children (four) attended Catholic schools and at present, thank God, our twelve Grandchildren (one not yet at school) all attended or are at Catholic schools. Most of them at least attend Mass on Sundays. Unfortunately the gradual withdrawal of both Nuns and Brothers from Catholic schools, in our children's times, together with the withdrawal (banning) of the old catechism and a teaching that attendance at Mass on Sundays was not necessary—(it was ok if you went another day??), did nothing for their education and or their ability to train their children for the sacraments. We need to be Catholic schools—my understanding is that schools have an APRE but then it is left to non-Catholics to include our Religion in what they teach the Students. How can that work? Similarly the majority of current parents (our children would support this statement) are not confident that they have an adequate background in our Religion to teach their children the sacraments. If we are going to be serious we need a number of teachers (relative to the size of the school) whose sole role is to teach religion—1/2 hour lessons each day in every class. Sacramental training needs to be through the schools—the parish only being used for children from non-Catholic schools. Certainly involve the parents but the whole thing gets lost when it is removed from the classroom.

I like to make 3 points; 1. The Holy Communion must be given with body and blood, people are not getting full blessing by receiving body only. 2. Kids should not be pulled out from holy Mass for children liturgy, they miss the blessing from holy Mass and later they ignore Mass because they think it is less important. 3. Money collection in the middle of the Mass is conveying that Church giving holy Mass and money equal importance. Passing plate on 2 to 3 times is distraction, humiliation for the poor and disrespecting holy communion.

To be more open to women in leadership in the Church. To invest more in the people in our parishes. Training, formation and support are very poor in our parishes. People that are involved in parishes are underappreciated and overburdened and very under trained.

To ensure equality and inclusivity for all—no matter their background, sexual preference, and gender. To meet people where they are in their life and to walk with them at whatever their stage without judgement. To revisit the issues of gender and sexual preference and equality of women in the Church in light of current knowledge and understanding in 2019 and adjust teachings accordingly. To go back to basics of the teachings of Jesus and not to get so caught up in the 'rules' that have evolved over time. The basic 10 commandments and to love one another.

I want my people back.

I feel we are being asked to love our fellow women and man. Tolerant and welcoming to each and every individual we encounter, regardless of where we meet them. I feel we are being asked to uphold the rights of each and every individual and ensuring social justice for all especially the most vulnerably.

To lead the western world back to love of the truth. To be the salt of the earth, not salt that has lost its flavour. To be a light that is not scared and hidden. Truth untarnished and uncompromised. I have read the BCE RSE programme and am shocked at how it has deviated from the truth in so many ways. St JP II TOB is rich in Church doctrine and tradition. The RSE programme is on the carnal level and in the words of St Paul, of the flesh. I am writing a synopsis which I will present to my principal and email to the archdiocese to elaborate on these deviations. I hope the archdiocese will be open to discussion in this area as I hope they will review many areas of Catholic education which are clearly contrary to Catholic teaching. We cannot help our adults and our youth if we continue to offer falsehood. The identity crisis we have today is due to an origin identity loss or lack of establishment. Children have no family to identify with as marriages break down and domestic violence increases, parental neglect rises. This original identity loss is the beginning of the detour from identity. We see a morphing of identity with each detour. People end up not knowing who they are and where they belong. The suicide rate rises dramatically. The truth sets you free. The port in the storm. The Stella Maris. The Church gives the identity and the place of belonging longed for over sometimes, an entire life. If the Church has no stable foundation in the truth, it can offer nothing to humanity. The modern Church has left the vine and is building itself on sand. It will fall and it will take the souls and lives of many with it. It already has. Yes, Christ may have been born among paganism and false worship (Pope Francis) but He raised Himself above all others when He was nailed to a cross and lifted above the world. We too must be lifted with Him input daily lives in living and proclaiming the truth. We must be the sign of contradiction, doing all in the name of The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit. The Mass must be the climax of Catholic living. The place where we are called to stand with Mary, St John and Magdalen and not with the soldiers who played games or the Jews who threw taunts, waiting for a miracle to convince themselves that Christ was indeed the Son of God. May He be placed in our tombs of our soul at reception of Holy Communion so that he may rise again in us as we go about our day and our week, bringing Him to the world. The Rosary is essential daily prayer or at least said weekly. Mary's womb is the new Eden for the new Adam. Her yes to God brought about the Incarnation and the Redeemer. The Rosary praises her as it meditates on the mysteries of the life of Christ. (Secret of the Rosary, St Louis De Montfort). Finally, humility and joy must be our mantle. We are free from the burden of sin in our reverent reception of the sacraments! Adam

and Eve enjoyed this freedom in Eden original innocence. Vice cannot enter with sanctifying grace. [-]

To guard the Catholic Church against the subtle inputs of Satan, such as modernism (which is slowly corrupting the authentic true Church in which Christ founded) and support of same-sex marriage (which is destructing true marriage and the value of families). The Catholic Church is not a man-made Church, it is Christ's Church and we must not adjust and alter aspects that we humans find hard to abide by just to suit our liking. Jesus died for this Church, let us not disrespect that or take it for granted. God knows best, so let us continue in the traditional direction in which he originally pointed us.

In the light of the revelations of the Royal Commission into the abuse of children and vulnerable adults, the Catholic Church has been challenged to a deep soul searching of its practices and attitudes. Although the majority of clergy and religious and lay people are clearly innocent of abusive activity, the Church needs to rigorously root out attitudes of clericalism and the monopolising of power and decision making by members of the hierarchy. Bishops and priests clearly have their legitimate and necessary roles, especially in regard to teaching and preaching. But their role of administration and even discipline needs to be shared much more with trained laity. Bishops and priests are called upon more than ever to bear witness to the Gospel values of humility, service and solidarity with ordinary people, especially the poor—in fact and deed, not just in words. As Pope Paul VI once said, the Church needs witnesses more than teachers—now more than ever! Failing this, we are in danger of not only losing most of our youth, but many others as well. We cannot allow the Church to become hostage to those, who for good intentions, prefer us to return to the past in terms of liturgy and practice, apparently for reasons of nostalgia or the hope that this will somehow restore a sense of Catholic identity. In contrast, an overemphasis on past practices such as the Latin Mass only serve to reinforce the impression that the Church is out of touch with the everyday needs of people and may even reinforce clerical attitudes among both priests and laity which is one of the key causes of the sexual abuse crisis. We cannot have a Church that appears to not want to be "in the world," when instead we are called to be "not of the world" in terms of our values and attitudes. I believe God is also calling our Church to take a more public stand on issues of social justice such as the treatment of refugees. But we will likely be more timid or have less credibility in the public forum if our lifestyle and behaviour fail to bear witness to the Gospel in terms of simplicity, humility, and deeper collaboration with all the members of the Church such as the laity and especially women. This is what people actually see and experience, and it is what forms their attitudes towards the Church. If they see us as living and treating one another justly and charitably, they are more likely to be open to our teachings as to who Jesus is and what God wants for humanity. The witnessing must come before the teaching, or at least go hand in hand with it. God is calling us to a greater authenticity and integrity, especially after the massive loss of integrity and trust we have experienced in recent years. If this can come out of the revelations of the Royal Commission, then at least some good can come out of the tragedy and evil that has been perpetuated.

To evangelise with other Christian denominations by pooling resources and volunteers together to educate the public about the importance of living a healthy and moral life free of drugs, addictions, alcohol, violence, abortion, suicide, rebuilding families and safety in our community.

This can be done by pooling resources with Christian radio (Vision National Christian radio), social media, newspaper distribution (Catholic Leader).

I think God is asking us to return to the letter of the Gospels. For example Jesus admonished the Pharisees for their external finery while having unclean hearts. The Church needs to rid itself of the external trappings that defies the messages of Christ's Gospel. Older generations were brought up to believe that the Church and its Administrators could do no wrong, total obedience was the preached mantra. Older Catholics who are now leaving the Church feel the anger and sorrow of the hypocrisy that was been practised. The Royal Commission and its exposure was the final straw. To win back these once loyal Catholics, the Church has to do a complete 360 degree turn. Dismantle completely Clericalism, get rid of titles and regalia, do not snip at the edges. We were brainwashed with a religion and so for many when that religion fell from Grace, they discarded it. Many years ago, one of our lovely parish priests, came down from the altar at homily time and asked the congregation: "Do you have a religion, well there's the door" "However, if you have a Faith then stay." That was my epiphany for change, up until then my husband and I and our children were just going through ritualistic steps that the Church demanded for us to be a good Catholic. Developing a deep and meaningful Faith is what is sustaining my husband and I during these trying times for the Church. A "dot all the eyes, cross all the t's" religion won't be enough to sustain many. Discussing change issues needed in the Church with like-minded fellow Catholics, we all agreed an accepting of change at the grassroots will be futile if the hierarchy changes of the Church are only piecemeal. It will be difficult for those in power, but they will have the laity support through prayers and vocal encouragement. If the changes are only window dressing, more of the sparse flock will abandon the Church. Many are hanging on because they have been promised change. We must all ask for the Holy Spirit intervention to guide, sustain and inspire us to a more positive, open and humble Church.

Public perception of the institutional Church—including the perception of many of the baptised—is actually getting in the way of proclaiming the Gospel and continuing Christ's mission. The Church is no longer well-regarded as a moral authority, a source of meaningful encounter with God through sacred liturgy, or a gathering of genuine community. In complete humility, we need to cut out the pretension of superiority and focus on humble service like Christ washing the feet of His disciples. Those bishops who insist on the trappings of power and status—even when they argue it is for Christ's glory not their own—have misread the Gospel and are just doing damage to the whole Church. All Church organisations need to be transparent and accountable in their processes, their finances and their employment and deployment of people. The prime measure of accountability must be service of Christ's mission. There's no point counting numbers attending Mass if those coming are not transformed in their lives towards prayer, justice and compassion. The Church must understand itself as ALL the baptised—no faux consultation with the laity on time-wasting committees where real decisions are always reserved for the ordained, despite how limited their talents may be in certain areas. The scandal of having the Church maintained by men and women who are at an age where they should be allowed retirement must be addressed. Stretching one aged priest across what would once have been several parishes is wrong—it degrades those communities, doesn't call the laity into their baptismal mission, and exhausts priests. Also wrong is to parachute in priests from cultures which still seem to operate on an

ecclesiology from a past age: patriarchal, hierarchical and monarchical, where the PP is like a little king. This is not just wrong, it's ineffective! God is asking us what we have always been asked in the Church—to love God, to love each other, to teach others the Gospel and baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit. And unless our institutional structures and rules and rubrics are serving that mission, we should be open to changing them. This also means challenging the operation of schools and hospitals which are Catholic in name and appearance—with all the outward observances—but whose corporate culture is far more about money, status and institutional aggrandisement than service of others which flows from love of Jesus nurtured in prayer. Purity of dogma, moral preaching and insistence on reverence for 'sacred' people, places and objects will not speak to our sceptical contemporary culture. We should listen to our prophetic Pope: if our shepherds don't smell like their sheep, the sheep will just ignore them. And take note—'shepherds' does not mean clergy. The best shepherds can be anyone who in their discipleship, leads others to Jesus.

I think God is calling for more priests to be ordained. In order to make this happen, the Catholic Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, needs to look at the people that it is excluding from this ministry. The Church has many faithful women who would make excellent priests, so changing the current practice of only ordaining men into the priesthood is one area that I believe needs to change.

I have been deeply concerned by the removal of the Third Rite of Reconciliation some years ago. I do not know what the powers-that-be were hoping to achieve. If they intended to force people back into the First Rite, then they have manifestly failed, and dismally so. When the Third Rite was available, many, many Catholics attended the services in Lent and in Advent each year. Now that the Third Rite is not offered, they do not go to Reconciliation at all. That seems to me a very poor outcome indeed. I hope that the powers-that-be in the Church can wake up to what the people need, and resume this form of Reconciliation as soon as possible. I also want to muse for a moment on the non-attendance of people aged 30 - 50 in our Churches. This includes my own children. I know that my children have a spirituality of their own, and are not anti-religion. My daughter has had her children baptised, and they attend a Catholic school. However, Church-going is a rarity. I wonder how the Church will look in the not too distant future. How will it nurture the undoubted spirituality of the next generation? How will it reach out to them, and show its relevance to their ways, thoughts and needs? The digital age may need to be part of the response if the next generation is to find a home in the Catholic Church. And, of course, the Church has very much atonement and fundamental reform to do to be worthy of the young people, and a place they would want to call home.

The same thing that Christ asked of us 2000 years ago. Obey the second commandment... Love one another as I have loved You ... Right across the world in our schools, churches, communities, states, nations in fact the whole world we do not love each other. This has led to so many problems for society. If we truly obey Gods second commandment then we would not have the horrendous problems that we inflict on ourselves. There are many examples of this. Acts of terrorism, abuse of power by wealthy nations, Injustice in dealing with refugees and minorities, paedophilia and abuse by Church hierarchy, dissent in many Church organisations by many of our lay leaders who have hidden agendas in their service to Christ. Infidelity and the breakup of

marriage which is the cornerstone of our society. The hideous passing of laws regarding abortion, in some jurisdictions abortion is legal even up to almost full term. Abuse of children both by each other and by parents and teachers. Abuse of power by government at all levels and also in the trade union movement. The Church should start immediately on a program aimed at making the second commandment a priority for us all, Christians, non-Christian faiths, society generally with an emphasis on the importance of love in our children.

I have previously submitted a response on line. However I have another issue that I think is important. My original submission was that we have lost the ability to love one another as demanded by Jesus more than 2000 years ago ... Love one another as I have loved you... However I feel there is another action the Church can undertake and it concerns a response to two grave problems that inhibit the growth and wellbeing of the Church today. 1. The horrendous problem of paedophilia by clergy and, 2. The lack of priest numbers that today means that many families are not attending any Catholic services in the outlying smaller communities. I believe both these problems could be solved by a change to Church law which would allow priests to marry. This would encourage many more young men to the priesthood. We have already had some experience with married priests who have come from other faiths. To my own experience this has been highly successful and in my own area of [-] the people's favourite preacher would be a convert from the Anglican faith. I would willingly accept female priests but I feel that this is not a time for major change and the change to Church laws allowing married priests would be almost transparent, whereas accepting women priests would be a major and probably disruptive change. I therefore suggest that the council request a change by the Holy See to allow married priests.

I think God is asking us to be more like a family group, where we welcome anybody in the same way. We should practise and encourage people to practise the values that are disappearing from our society (e.g. faith, love, trust, honesty, tolerance, respect, patience, etc.). We should also be practising the Ten Commandments and attending Sunday Masses, as we're forgetting that any society has rules to follow to live in peace among ourselves.

I believe God is with us, giving us strength—if only we open our eyes to see, ears to hear, and fully awaken our hearts to this beauty—to be courageous. I remember the character of Aslan from Narnia, a favourite book from my childhood. Aslan speaks of courage to Lucy: “Have courage, dear heart” (or similar words). And she did have courage, faith, perseverance... I'm a woman in a Church that doesn't fully embrace all that woman might offer in leadership. I believe God is always inviting us (me, as one of 'us') to be extended, to give fully of our gifts. I believe we are a Church that can enable this without fear. We grow, we transform, we learn, we forgive. I love this faulty Church. I care. Please, let those who are in decisive roles enable the laity who care (especially women, families) have reason to keep hoping for a Church that will be inclusive, loving, inspiring, prophetic and welcoming. A community of Christ that brings us all closer to one another and God who is love.

God is asking for greater empowerment of the laity, as when they gather God is present. God is asking that the laity be able to conduct liturgies when there are insufficient ordained priests of their own culture to lead the celebration of Mass. God is acknowledging that placement of priests

of a culture remote from Australia in the role of leadership in liturgy renders those priests into the status close to that of a robot.

1. Eradicate all aspects of the culture of clericalism and give the laity their rights to share in the guidance and leadership of the Church, rights conferred on them by baptism. As a sign that the hierarchy is really serious about this, archbishops should renounce the title "Your Grace", bishops the title "My Lord" and senior clerics the title "Monsignor". 2. Adopt zero tolerance for all sexual abuse by clergy, whether this is abuse of children or of adults, particularly sexual abuse of nuns. Remove offenders from ministry. 3. Provide ongoing adult faith formation for all ages. 4. Empower women to take their rightful place at all levels of leadership in the Church. 5. Determine objectively whether the RE syllabus used in Catholic schools is effective in developing the faith of the students and change it if it is inadequate.

God is asking the same thing of us that He has asked at any period in the Church's history: Listen to Him, obey the Ten Commandments, make God your top priority, go to Confession and save your soul. We are not any different to any other Catholic in the last 2000-odd years. This is where we fall down—thinking that God will treat us differently to a person living in a little village somewhere in Europe, say, in the 1600s. Just because we live in a world saturated with impurity and sin does not mean that we will be judged by Christ when we die according to different standards. The same standards will apply. Also, God is asking us to listen to Our Lady and pray the rosary. This is not rocket science. Our Lady has told us at La Salette, Lourdes, Fatima, Portugal, and Akita, Japan, to pray, to stop sinning and pray the rosary. She must be beside herself with frustration and grief because we have not listened to Her.

To be more inclusive, open, accepting, supportive of: asylum seekers, different cultures and religions, a greater role for women in the Church, take responsibility for their actions (particularly in regards to sexual abuse), put more pressure on politicians to take children out of detention centres, be servants of the needy and to share their wealth with the less fortunate.

To live the gospel, respect and love all others.

To be a more humble Church and I am not talking about the people in the pews. The hierarchical nature of the Church has left men who have a "born to rule" approach to make decisions. This structure has facilitated the sexual abuse which has torn the Church down. The Church has become the centre of jokes and stand-up comedians and a person almost has to apologise for being Catholic today. It makes the decision for people to choose other activities on Sundays. Due to the Church structures most men in leadership live in a separate cosseted world which leads to a limited understanding of peoples' lives. A more humble leadership, at every level, would be recognised, accepted and become attractive because more Gospel values would be a reality, not just a phrase. Don't just listen to the people, that is easy. Really listen to what is being said, don't dismiss it as a bundle of statements that can be glossed over and put in some report which will look great on a shelf...and nothing changes. Even the older people will leave the Church then because we have seen decades of hypocrisy. Too many parish priests think the parish is theirs...wrong! Priests come and go and the people hopefully stay in THEIR parish. The approach must be to Listen to the Laity, respect the Laity as the People of God, as the words of the Vatican Council state. Have you heard that phrase so often that you have forgotten the meaning and the

<p>theology? Perhaps it would be worth going back to apply the hermeneutic of "interpreting the signs of the times". The Holy Spirit is making these signs extremely clear.</p>
<p>To be earnest in prayer to help pave the way for changes in the way we view things in our Church today. Some things that need to happen—For Church to be serious in rectifying the wrongs that have occurred over a long period of time. Please get this attended to now, so we can move forward without labels attached to our faith and restore our beliefs within ourselves and the wider community.</p>
<p>Need to share our faith—to reach out to all. Need to deepen our faith journey. Need to provide leadership and sacramental ministry to all communities that are under serviced. Need to be open to change to how we do things. Need to provide opportunities to grow our spiritual life. Need to pray for a successful outcome to the Plenary Council. Need to speak out about our needs and the challenges we face. Need to engage with our families regarding our Christian faith. Need to become more active and involved in our parish community.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to rebuild a humble Church committed to the service of others. The sexual abuse scandal has shredded the Church's reputation in this country, probably irrevocably. The response of the bishops to sexual abuse historically and to the testimony at the Royal Commission was, quite frankly, too protracted, too self-interested and too arrogant. It was completely at odds with the message of the Gospel and suggests an institution more interested in institutional power rather than mission. It is time for bishops and priests to accept Pope Francis' challenge to [be] less like princes and more like "shepherds with the smell of the sheep."</p>
<p>To look and listen to the Church going faithful who get hurt by the continuing actions of deviates within the Church ministry.</p>
<p>The courage to change.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to reconcile with the victims of sexual abuse and to provide succour to their sorrows. God is also asking us to make sure that everyone is treated as one of the children in the flock. God is asking the strong should help the weak and vulnerable. God is also challenging us not to walk past the needy.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to get out from behind our institutions and to respond to people in our community with compassion and generosity rather than dogma and tradition. The Church in Australia seems stuck and is in danger of dipping back into old habits instead of engaging with the world of our time and place. The Signs of our times—the sexual abuse scandals; the poor treatment of Indigenous people; the plight of refugees and asylum seekers; the positive acceptance of diversity, especially of sexuality are all calling us to respond with our hearts rather than with old fashioned and disconnected attitudes.</p>
<p>To become a missionary Church again, spreading the Good News to each other and the world, empowered by an enhanced Eucharist. To me this implies, (whilst maintaining all of the ageless and essential elements of our Blessed sacrament), revising our Eucharistic celebration so that, firstly it reverts to being a much closer replication of the Last Supper and secondly, it enables far greater congregational participation. At the same time there needs to be a better organized Faith</p>

education system in each parish leading to each Catholic being better prepared to be part of a more aggressive evangelization of our Faith. We will not build the Kingdom however, without enhancing the key roles of our bishops, priests, religious and laity. Finally to quote from my submission: I wonder what the Holy Spirit, the Saints and the Martyrs, who made enormous sacrifices to create our Church, think of the state of our contemporary Church. While it may be thriving and even growing in some parts of the world, in western societies like Australia, it has become a mere shell of what it once was. Its congregations are aged and rapidly declining, it is held up to ridicule by many and worst still it is often seen as irrelevant and ignored by others. The Holy Spirit, the Saints and the Martyrs, who made enormous sacrifices to create our Church, must be concerned. I wonder if their key question for the Plenary Council is: will you take the easy path, (so well-trodden throughout the centuries), by making a few cosmetic alterations and by avoiding making changes that will be controversial, that will be fiercely opposed by conservative minorities, that will take courage and will turn the Church into the Kingdom, Jesus called for in His Great Commission? (Matthew 28:19-20)

I dream a Church that has respect for all creation, and in equal love for all peoples.

Love, forgiveness, compassion, mercy, stewardship. The same as 2000 years ago.

I think God wants us to reach out to the youth with the message of Christ in a way that they can understand, before it is too late.

I think that God is asking us to present the truth of who He is and live a life of authentic witness to a secular nation in a way that they can hear and understand. I think that God is asking the Church in Australia to take a close look at its leadership and governance structures to ensure that those who are leading us are doing it in an authentic and transparent way that regains the trust of the Australian people. I think that God is asking the Church to plan for the future wisely, to take into account our human and financial resources and steward them in a way that brings Him glory. Specifically, I think that this raises questions about the shortage of Vocations in Australia and how the Church will respond to this into the future. I think that God is inviting us to reflect on how the Church can be less clerical and more lay led and how our parishes can move from 'maintenance mode' to mission mode.'

- to bring refugees into Australia
- to bring to light to important issues such as depression
- to move on from old traditions and to think about where we are at now as a society
- to promote good health and assist with health
- to be able to think that all priests are not bad
- to let priests have family because that is what the Church promotes
- to look into climate change a lot more

The Church faces many challenges in our contemporary society. While there is indeed a virtuous culture on offer, many young people live lives in which they do not associate the Church with being relevant to their lives. Like any public following, the Church will need to adapt and move with what is perceived to be important to society at that point in time in order to maintain a

<p>relevant presence. This could be more effectively done by placing more focus on actively listening rather than expecting automatic compliance with rigid traditions.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be loving, accepting, patient and merciful. God is asking us to be strong in our faith and develop our faith so we can be an example for others in how we live our life.</p>
<p>Review access of clergy to children and the powerless.</p>
<p>Church needs to continue to advocate for genuine integration of Gospel values into all levels of Government and commercial entities policies, practices and legislation. To be strong in promoting the good work that the Catholic Church does in Australia. To deal justly with past poor behaviour, while being not manipulated.</p>
<p>Fidelity—There are examples throughout our history of what has happened when individuals and the Church are not faithful to the Gospel to which we are called. The words and actions of all of us, and as a collective, need to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus. Courage—we need to be courageous in our belief. Christianity, and Catholicism in particular, seem to be under attack in contemporary Australia. We need to be courageous and bring our belief into the public space and not make apologies for our belief. We cannot shrink. Repentance—are we truly sorry for the mistakes in our past. How have we shown our repentance and ensured that we will strive not to make those mistakes again. Pastoral and not hierarchical—can we flatten our organisation to allow for a more flexible and pastoral response to individuals in the pews and in our employ.</p>
<p>To be attuned to the needs of our youth and young adults:- they are our future. To ensure our elderly are kept involved in our Church: our population is ageing. We need to develop a strong sense of community so as to foster pastoral care. As well as doing this with the grace we receive in the sacraments, it is important to kindle this sense of community in a social sense. To foster interactions and support of one another in our local parish and neighbourhood.</p>
<p>To participate enthusiastically during Mass. To make a statement about providence (see submission).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Above all—Pray, pray and then Pray some more. - Pray that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts and minds to accept the change that is necessary to foster the renewal of the Church and facilitate bringing Christ’s Word to all. - If possible, participate in the Plenary Council process by lodging submissions for consideration. - Be open to all ideas put forward and discern what can be done that doesn’t conflict with the teachings of Jesus. - Have Faith that the process for the Plenary Council in conjunction with The Holy Spirit will bring forth the changes necessary to sustain the Church of the future to be relevant in the society in which we live. - Trust that The Holy Spirit will touch the hearts of the decision makers to do what is necessary to guide the Church to relevance in the future. - Recommit to the teaching of Christ and how we proclaim His teaching.

- Offer more Prayers for the Council's success and the acceptance of the decisions it makes.
- God wants us to work toward bringing back to Him those people he has lost.

I think at the heart of this statement is looking, identifying and responding. So, I think God is really asking Australia and Australian people to look for God, identify God in life and, then respond to make the Gospel alive, meaningful and purposeful today for Australians. In saying this it is absolutely and fundamentally clear to me that there is a definite split between God and the Catholic Church for most people. The average Australian, I believe does not identify the Catholic Church with the God of Australian people. The predisposition to strict hierarchy, clericalism and practice exclusivity disables the Catholic Church in doing God's work. As Stephen Bevans so beautifully states "The mission has a Church rather than the Church has a mission". Our Church, sadly has become dumb, both cognitively and verbally. The decisions and patriarchal practices are ridiculous in the 21st century. Ignoring women and the enormous power of grandmothers, mothers, sisters, daughters and girls is unbelievably dumb, as well as being socially debilitating. While the Church has been under periods of severe persecution and disruption within the long rich history of our faith, the conditions the Church faces today are very different and, in particular the Western Church are so critical that ignoring and not responding could sound the death knell for the Catholic Church in Australia as we know it. I believe God is demanding me and the Church to be counter hierarchical, counter male dominant and counter clericalism and be prepared to take a risk. Not be frightened to open up and let go of the dumb stuff. I also believe that God is demanding me and the Church more broadly to listen and ethically, responsibly respond to the findings of the Royal Commission. The horrendous and deeply disturbing revelations provide the opportunity for a new way of being transparent, or being humble, of ensuring that WE maintain an intentional focus on the 'poor' the emotional scared and brutalised people who suffered at the hands of priests and religious. Having 4 adult children, I am acutely aware of the lens of credibility and integrity that they expect from a Catholic Church that is going to be meaningful in the future to them. First and foremost my children don't believe official Church rhetoric and responses. They align the patriarchal construct of traditional Church, the active resistance to change as non-negotiable blockers to future connection to the Church. The great treasure of the Church in Australia is arguably our vibrant Catholic school system. The formation and point of difference remains essential. It is a delicate balance full of paradox—remaining Catholic while maintaining a connection with our culture. We certainly have not read the signs of our times. Whatever comes out of the Plenary, I am hopeful that the joy of the Gospel, while be central.

To look to models in and outside of the Church that have vibrant faith communities. The average parish is reminiscent of a grave yard. People mostly elderly who shuffle in at the start of Mass and then shuffle out. They are mostly disinterested in talking about their faith. Compare this to places like Emmanuel Community where the richness of the word is preached and accepted and practiced. People share their faith with each other. Young people are seen everywhere. THIS is the Church we want!

1. God is asking us to spread his gospel of love to our neighbours (everyone we meet) by:
seeing our neighbours through Gods eyes—seeing past their physical appearance; race; gender; religion etc.

<p># by showing a good Christian example through living God's message in our daily life.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. We must allow the Holy Spirit to be more active in our lives according to the prayer "Come Holy Spirit enkindle within us the fire of your love so that we may recreate the face of the earth".3. To welcome all people to receive the Spirit of Christ.4. To welcome more involvement of the Laity in the running of the Church, especially women.5. To have more religious education for the youth.
<p>I think that God is asking us to find ways to bring families and especially children to the Faith or back to the Faith. The congregations are ageing and without the youth there will be no Church to talk about in the future.</p>
<p>God is asking us to live our lives as Jesus did. That means loving one another and showing compassion for all.</p>
<p>To be inclusive and respectful of all. To listen to those in our community and make changes to accommodate their needs. To make our Church community more accessible and thoughtful of all who participate and more accepting of what every individual brings to the community. To be open to change and improvement.</p>
<p>Well I believe that God is continually calling us to Holiness which is not easy in a secular society such as ours. I fell in love with my Faith all over again when I found Apologetics, and suddenly I knew why I believed what I had always believed. So now I could, as 1 Peter 3:15 says "always be ready with an answer for the hope that is in you, but do so in charity". I could now not be afraid to share my Faith with others when asked a question about it, and here I believe is where the Church needs to make a concerted effort. Once people are evangelised to be taught to know their Faith so that they can share it with others know Christ then there should be much more extracurricular teaching outside of homilies at Mass. Ongoing Bible studies, Alpha courses should be made mandatory for everyone in the parishes. Young people should know their faith so that they can give it away and that for me would be to reintroduce Apologetics as an ongoing Faith education which could be run by Laity or priests. My people die for lack of knowledge as scripture says, and we will die if we don't become missionary disciples. Yours in Christ, [-]</p>
<p>God is asking the Church to realise that it has let him or her down in its attitudes and actions and leadership in managing Gods' greatest Creation 'our Church '. Our leadership has created a structure that is distant and unresponsive to the needs of those that it is meant to serve, we the people of the Church. The bishops have acted with only their or the Vatican interest at heart and at the expense of those who it was built to serve. The time for change has come! We must see the laity become involved in the running of the Church. We must be involved in the selection and appointments within the Church. This must particularly apply to the appointment of the Clergy. No longer can the bishop appoint a priest arbitrarily to a parish with no regard to the congregation. Priests must be appointed for a limited time so that they cannot stay indefinitely. It is imperative for the renewal of the parishes that 'new blood' is brought in regularly to grow the faithful. Accountability has to be shown in management of the parishes. At the moment at our parish the priest is not required to be assessed in their running of our parish, by this I refer to the financial statements of the parish which have not been circulated to the community. We give</p>

monthly to the collection through 'Direct Debit' but what happens after that is a case of have some faith! The priests and the bishops must realise that our parish is not their fiefdom but part of something much greater. God needs the bishops to form a review system of the parishes that is both accessible and accountable not to the bishops, but to us the parishioners. The bishops must realise that the Church has lost its relevance to our society. You lost our integrity as a Church by the actions you allowed to happen! How to recover this situation? Firstly you need to cooperate with the relevant authorities completely. The Church has to stop telling people what they can and can't do as we have surely shown how hollow our words were. That will mean allowing all people to be able to take communion, not just a few who have earned the right. Jesus was for the broken not the pillars of our society. Priests must come from us, that means the married, the gay, Women, the single should have the opportunity to serve God. They must be able to relate to our lives not something that is foreign to them. I pray that our Church can recover from this Unholy mess and that our leadership appreciates the anger and disappointment that they have created. I have added a submission with her permission from [-]. This is an outstanding submission which pretty well captures our views.

I think God is asking us to keep our hearts open and listen to the whole body of the Church. For too long we the (lay people) have not been heard or listened to! The Australian Church could and should lead the way in renewing our faith in the clergy. God wants us to be a joyful happy people that are engaged with our faith and have a sense of belonging. We need and demand a serious change in behaviour and attitude to many aspects in the Church. We need to be more inclusive to everyone! We need to see a change in the hierarchy! A change in the appointment of priests to parishes by consulting the parishioners. I pray that the council will listen to the Holy Spirit and wake up!

Evangelisation to deepen the reason of our faith having our encounter with Jesus to be share it within our parishes. A lack of evangelisation leads to abuse, etc. Tolerance with other religious practices. Creation of strategies to promote the proper evangelisation for Catholic schools' teachers, students, parents and staff in general. All religion teachers shall have a personal encounter with the living Jesus to ensure they transmit the correct message to their students. Promoting the evangelisation from home working together with the schools to reinforce the message to our children. All churches shall have activities for children so they can engage from an early age recognising social differences and helping actively people in need. Unity. To achieve this we need Humbleness, obedience, open ears to listen with good attitude, preparation and trust in God. Catholics for conviction, not for tradition!

To assist the needy and make the refugees welcome.

Several years after Rome placed restrictions on the use of the Third Rite of Reconciliation, many Catholics still lament the loss of regular celebrations of the Third Rite. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has handed down its findings. Some Catholics feel promptings of the Holy Spirit at work here. There is most certainly (as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1483) a case of grave necessity, in the Church, not only in fulfilling the recommendations of the Royal Commission, but in listening to the sense of the faithful. In June 2014, the International Theological Commission released a document, "Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church." The statement surprised many because it acknowledges the role played by ordinary

Catholics in the growth and development in Church teaching throughout history and still today. Three quotes: 1. "It must be recalled that ... sometimes the truth of the faith has been conserved not by the efforts of theologians or the teaching of the majority of bishops but in the hearts of believers." (119), 2. "The *sensus fidei* is a sort of spiritual instinct that enables the believer to judge spontaneously whether a particular teaching or practice is or is not in conformity with; the Gospel and with apostolic faith." (49), 3. "There is a vital interaction in each believer between the *sensus fidei* and the living faith in the various contexts of his or her personal life...." Pope Francis blames "clericalism" in the Catholic Church for creating a culture where criminal abuse was widespread and extraordinary efforts were made to keep the crimes secret. Throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis has pointed to clericalism as a disease in the Church, an illness that pretends "the Church means priests and bishops, ignoring or minimizing the God-given grace and talents of lay people. Clericalism involves trying "to replace or silence or ignore or reduce the people of God to a small elite", generally the clerics themselves. Let's be encouraged by the whispering of the Spirit, the words of Pope Francis and the sense of the faithful.

To remind the Church leaders—specifically those in the Vatican—of the most Holy words of Saint Peter as succinctly put within God's Holy Bible namely: The First and Second Letters of Saint Peter. These succinct words by Saint Peter are a timely reminder of what to do, what not to do, and now—What to do for the future of Our Lord's Holy Church. Amen.

That His people know their history, their culture and defend the faith. Marx and Churchill have been quoted as saying 'that a people deprived of our history are easily persuaded.' When the history through stories, culture and the religious writings are not passed on to the next generation, then the void is filled with other ideas that, on the surface, seem satisfactory, but in reality are empty and without substance. Hence, society is struggling. Mental health issues are on the rise. People are confused and lonely. To know the history, His people need to study the writings of the Church fathers like Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas. To know the culture, the catechism needs to be taught in the schools and in the Church. So many Catholic people are unsure of the basis of their faith, and believe that it is open to their own interpretation. At the Catholic schools I attended in the 1980's, we were taught about other world religions but did not explore our own Catholic faith in depth. As a result, most of my contemporaries don't attend church, and are happy to take on 'new age' spiritualism, a favourite believing that 'the universe will provide.' Individualism is the root of cause of many people's loneliness. Secularism has silenced the Masses including the priests, and the Catholic faithful. Catholics need to be bold and steadfast in speaking the truth, no matter the cost. The catechism and the liturgy have all been a matter of intense study and debate by the Church's Fathers. Cardinals, archbishops and the Pope have written encyclicals explaining a position of the faith. There is a reason for everything that happens in the liturgy—for every word spoken, for every action, for every symbol, for every prop during the Mass. His people have just lost the knowledge of their history and culture and this needs to be reignited and taught in the schools, through public lectures, in the Universities, through online lectures available to anyone interested in learning about their faith. The priests are old and tired and are hard pushed conducting Masses in their parish. Our parish priest is in his 70s. His relief priest is also in his 70s. There is a reason that God hasn't chosen women to be priests and This is not the answer. God will raise up the priests that are needed to carry on His

mission. Parish churches will need to be closed and parishes amalgamated, so that there is more than one priest in each parish. The Catholic Community needs to be reignited—people working together for the common good and to spread the Good News that Christ came to share and impart to us. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The Catholic faithful need to understand the definitions for each of these fruits of the Holy Spirit. If the Church could impart this, there would be a marked change seen in the Church in Australia.

I think God is asking us to listen to people inside and outside the Church openly without value judgements—women, Indigenous people, refugees, migrants, people from other Faiths, LGBTI people, marginalised people, people who have been abused by the Church, women in domestic violent situations. And I mean really listen and provide opportunities to hear their stories. The Church needs a Theology of Women and a Theology of Children because unless the thinking changes—nothing will change. We also need women in key leadership roles in the Church to push reform and well as make the Church a more welcoming place—and to contribute their vast intellectual gifts. The Melkite Church has married priests and the wives contribute enormously to women's inclusion in Church activities and a feeling of belonging. The Church needs to continue to strongly remove child abusers from our ranks. Anne Barrell Doyle from a research group heard on Fran's ABC breakfast radio today says the Pope should change Canon Law so that it enshrines zero tolerance for child abusers i.e. one strike and you're out! Of course these priests need rehabilitation but those who are abused need help first. The emphasis needs to shift to those who have been abused. Documents detailing this abuse should be open to scrutiny. All Church finances should be independently audited. The Church is trying but it must be bold. 'Safeguarding' is a good program as are the short courses on theology offered by ACU. Lay and religious organisations are taking up the challenge—Mary Tinney's Earthlink, Delamore's series of talks on Vatican II, the Grail's spiritual and intellectual efforts; Centacare's ongoing pastoral care training, Believing Women for a Culture of Peace's multi-faith efforts. As praiseworthy as these efforts are we need bold, broad reform if the Church is going to survive where the gifts of women and men are enthusiastically embraced for positive change. We love the Church and we hate to see her struggling under these enormous demands but I strongly believe she will survive if she embraces reforms so clearly needed—women in leadership positions, greater autonomy for the bishops and priests to respond to local issues and bold steps of reform.

Structure of Church needs to change—too much power is in the hands of clergy. There is a lack of transparency and accountability. Laity, both men and women, need to be part of decision making, this is their right given in baptism. Laity led services.* would help priests who are trying to serve several parishes, * allow priests to have more time with communities if Masses were fewer and they could spend quality time when they come, * laity need to be more involved in all aspects of parish life.

Make the Church relevant today and into the future.

Plenary 2020 Listening and Dialogue outcomes [-] February 14 2019. Focal point of suggestions: INCLUSIVENESS Specifically, the need for

- Youth Engagement

- Roles for Laity and specifically women
- Welcoming
- Supportive community
- Role of priests.

Expansion on Specific Points: Accountability for scandals, will encourage a return to an authentic organization. Some of the practices, and exclusions, specifically relating to the distribution and receipt of communion, further strengthen a negative impression of exclusion and judgement as perceived in practice. The general congregation has lost trust in the role of the priests. Individual priests may be exempt, but the role is viewed with suspicion as a result of past offences. We need to train our future priests to both gain and retain trust. The youth need to have their voice heard on the future of the Church. We need to create a supportive learning environment for our children, who are not receiving their faith from their parents or schools, as the occurrence of religious and trained laity in faith formation are now absent. There was some personal testimony of an experience of the arrogance and disrespectful behaviour of both older and younger priests, who have subsequently turned out to be hiding substantial abuses or failings. We need to ensure that our priests are not “isolated” so they have their own community support. This may mean married or woman priests. Notes recorded by [-]

Plenary 2020 Listening and Dialogue outcomes [-] February 21 2019. Focal point of suggestions: All Relate to a Sense of Alignment with Christ’s mission. INCLUSIVENESS, RELEVANCE, RECONCILIATION, CARING.

Expansion on Specific Points: Inclusiveness: All Colours, Creed and Background. A more ecumenical approach to inviting people to share our faith, especially those not familiar with our rituals or practice. Increase the involvement of woman in the leadership role, and gradually reduce the patriarchal nature of the Church Hierarchy. Relevance: Drawing the Happy Clappers. So long as we see them as “Happy Clappers” it implies we are not happy or joyful about our faith. The disconnect between school, church and the practice of faith. There was nothing in the school newsletter about the Listening and Dialogue sessions, despite it being widely and extensively advertised in the parish Newsletter attached. When challenged about this, the response was why is it relevant to the school. Involvement of Laity may encourage relevance, because all are called. The perception of the “Secrecy” of the Catholic Church, and the lives of those who lead it, promotes and image of something that is no longer relevant, or appropriate in today’s society. Reconciliation: The only way to achieve healing is through forgiveness and reconciliation. A sense of reconciliation has to flood the Church, and must be led by those in authority. This will lead to a closer alignment between the impression of those guilty of the sins, and those seeking forgiveness for sins of others. Caring: If we restrict our Caring nature to a Sunday, we are restricting our membership and encounter with Christ. We need to promote that encounter 7 days a week, not one hour a week, but opening the caring nature of our faith, and empowering those with capacity to be involved.

The year 10 students of [-] think that God is asking for females to be allowed to become priests in Australia and have equal opportunities in the Church as men. This would add another perspective in Masses and teaching the youth. It would also encourage more people to enter the Catholic

Church. Also, married male/female priests would have a similar benefit. Married priests would mean more priests, so more than one priest could be at a Church and have family time. Allowing female priests is the next step towards female rights and equality. It would take the Church into the modern world to become a modern institution. Younger, married, female priests would encourage more youth. Priests should also have a Bluecard. The Church should host more youth centred events and activities to increase engagement. The Church should care for the environment and animals and use our resources more efficiently. We should be more inclusive of diverse backgrounds, include homosexuals. We should communicate with all ages. We should help the poor, and not waste money on churches. We shouldn't force Church on youth and adults, let them come to Christ on their own but point them in the right direction. We need to work to overcome Church stereotypes.

I believe that the Catholic Church has been let down by our Pastors. They have failed in their duty of care to their flock and I believe that God is calling them to reform—especially in the realm of being good, holy, humble and poor pastors. If they reform themselves, the result will flow to the people of God. Our priests and religious, since Vatican II, have interpreted the reforms to give licence to an easy way of living. They have taken unnecessary early retirement, short weeks, days taken off for meeting with bishop and Deaneries, no daily Mass or availability of Reconciliation for the faithful. We, the laity, have been left to fare as best we can—wandering far to get to Mass and the sacraments. No matter how many of the Laity or Deacons help in taking Holy Communion to the sick and house-bound, they do not make up for the presence of the Pastor. We may have some shortage of priestly numbers, but the ones we do have are ministering much less to the Laity and the Dying. Our priests receive more than an adequate wage, a car (sometimes luxury), housing, medical benefits, holidays, sabbaticals, etc. All of this goes to an 'easy and good living', while the majority of the faithful are poor and struggling financially and can't afford such luxuries. Of course, our priests SHOULD be cared for, but they should also be poor in living and spirit in imitation of their Master. It may also be time that God is calling our Clergy and Religious to apologise to the faithful for their own abuse and lack of leadership. Nothing has been said of the damage the abuse has done to the Laity in general. The Laity is suffering.

To restore fundamental trust in the institution following the collapse of that trust post Royal Commission through a range of activities including:

1. obtaining top professional advice around a proactive media campaign including multimedia,
2. securing the services of a coterie of very competent Church members (not necessarily clergy and preferably not, Frank Brennan would be a good example though of a competent clergy member) to speak frequently on the Church's behalf on a range of issues,
3. review the administration arrangements of all teaching institutions,
4. review/update/modify religious instruction curriculum in all teaching institutions in the country,
5. promote the Church's commitment to community service organisations and make sure the Churches successes there are gotten out.....including taking a prominent position in the response to the aged care royal commission and disability commission,
6. develop an on line product to keep in touch with young school leavers from Catholic schools,

7. not be afraid to take a stand on things that clearly challenge core society values e.g. the show Marriage at First Sight which is offensive at a number of levels because the importance of marriage is core to society strength irrespective of religion. But be wary of being seen as socially out of touch.

8. recognise that many young people have left the Church and won't come back but accept that provided they identify with and accept the moral compass shown by the Church so that over time a sense of curiousness is ignited for people to come back.

Principles:

1) brand Church has been smashed by royal commission but was on the nose beforehand, why was that and don't just put issues off as being the result of the commission,

2) Church has lost large numbers of young people.....why? People not interested in worship but is it a problem? How else can the Church engage? For example lots of young people are lonely....is this an opportunity e.g. Church run dating app, Church based networking groups, Sent from my iPad

To remove the spiritual roadblock of homosexuality for those with a religious vocation. To say that homosexuality is about power is misguided in my view and fails to address the matter. To allow optional marriage of those with a religious vocation; marriage being between a man and woman. A vigorous sexual marriage is what God calls most of us towards. To ensure orthodox ethics, morality and doctrine is taught and valued in our Church.

- Better unity with cultures within the Church
- Youth Movement
- To provide reversion and conversions of any age
- Involve women in leadership roles (not priesthood)
- Let him in to our home, work and friendships
- Involve children in the liturgy
- To allow everyone to have their story told
- Bring the people
- To be more compassionate to the people seeking refuge in our country
- Open our hearts to accepting diversity
- Forever remain faithful to our heritage
- Keep our rich traditions but modernise for our ever changing lives
- Openness to listening and understanding why young adults LOVE the traditions
- Getting back to the heart of Jesus
- Authenticity

- Strength and passion
- More Authenticity in our Catholic Education systems
- Stop and listen
- Our ways are not his
- Bolder Vocations
- Promotions especially for Marriage, priesthood and religious life
- Better Faith Formation
- Maybe a modernised interpretation of the saints for unbelievers in our Catholic schools
- Be more bold with sacraments—not Just a transactional account
- Community
- Better support for our priests
- Allow priests to Marry so they can experience God's love with a spouse

Do not zero in on precise programs or educational/intellectual tools and resources. Seek God's mercy and grace that the image the Church has of itself and its people changes so that God is then free to bring it into relevance for a sick and disordered society.

I believe God is calling us to action; asking us to be relevant to our times, to act with authenticity, openness, a listening heart; to renew the canon laws which restrict the forward movement of the Church into our current world. Having been very involved in parish life all my life—within my local parish community and in my work with [-] Catholic Education in my professional life, I have attended many assemblies and gatherings to discern a way forward for our faith communities. Each time I get excited and enthusiastic about possible change, the canons of the Church are so prescriptive as to limit a way forward. I believe God is calling us to reform the Church, beginning with its laws and canons. Otherwise, this Plenary 2020 listening is, once again, merely words and platitudes rather than service to God! God calls us to love and stewardship. Let's be authentic in that call!

In comparison with the 20th century {mid} our Churches are nearly empty. Mass is almost an over 60s precinct. WHY? The Mass will always remain the same but is it possible that the ancient liturgy which surrounds the Mass, is not suited to our 21st century society. As one 25 year old said to me, "I stopped going to Mass years ago. It isn't alive it's dead." Should the ancient format of Mass be revised in order to meet the needs of modern society?

To re-think how we bring new Catholics into the Church. Having children at the end of 8 or 9 be confirmed is unrealistic. They are not old enough and do not have the cognition to know what it means to be a Catholic. They should be confirmed in high school around the age of 16 where they can understand what it means to be a Catholic and what commitment and way of life that entails. At the moment children are confirmed purely to get into Catholic high schools without any intention of practising the faith.

I think that God is asking us to ... bring the Catholics who have drifted away from the Church back to the Church, and those who are yet to find Jesus into the Church. The Pentecostals seem to be able to fill their auditoriums at their services. Why can't we? They place an emphasis on being charismatic. Why don't we? I think that one of the ways to "increase our numbers" is for the Catholic Church to "fire up" the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR). We need the Holy Spirit to fire us up and to lead us as He did with the Apostles at the Pentecost. We need to experience that same Pentecost (see Acts Chapter 2) to help fulfil the Great Commission to "... make disciples of all nations...to the end of the age" - Mt 28:18-20. I can testify to this as I recently joined the CCR [-] and it has changed my life. I feel a much closer personal relationship with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This has encouraged me to very consciously learn more of my faith and deepen my faith, to be a living example of the faith and to share the faith and love of Jesus with those I meet. I also believe that evangelisation must start at the top. Pope Francis is doing a wonderful job but it must continue to translate down to the parish level. I think that we need the movement of the Holy Spirit. The Church must have a unified approach. From what I observe, parishes even neighbouring parishes don't seem to have the unified approach e.g. Alpha seem to be growing within the Catholic Church parishes around where I live, but not all the parishes are embracing Alpha ... and Alpha was started by an Anglican priest. Does Australia need a dedicated Evangelical team to promote evangelisation down to the grass root levels? Worldwide there are so many different organisations promoting evangelisation e.g. Holy Spirit Interactive in Dubai, Bishop Barron Word on Fire Institute. Should Australia have one itself? Or is there one already?

The same thing God has always us, for us to follow him, turn back to God, love our neighbours and live a good life.

God is asking us in Australia to reduce rules that constrain us with subsequent penalties that scare us and to increase love that flows between us.

The Catholic Church in Australia needs to be Australian! It should reflect Australia's culture as it witnesses to the way of Jesus as we endeavour to live our baptismal commitment. Australia is a democracy; we believe in democracy. Parish, Deanery, Diocesan Councils should be democratically chosen with the priest/dean/bishop as an ordinary member.

I think God wants us to be compassionate, but at the same time I don't think he expects us to be sheep. Australia has no patriotism, Australians are too dispassionate, they mainly have an attitude of 'it will be right, mate'. I believe that bad things happen because good people do or say nothing—Australians have a habit of letting things go, and then when it's too late and they have lost their identity or their values, then they scream. I think God wants us to be warriors for him—I don't mean in a militant way—but if you believe in something, then you need to stand up for him, not deny him.

Approval of artificial contraception. Non-Catholics to be welcome to receive the Eucharist.

1. To encourage and overtly provide opportunities for all, especially youth/children, to participate and feel at home in a vibrant community that promulgates the truth, adheres to Gospel values and enjoys inclusive liturgies in the Aust. Context,

2. To find more passionate and enthusiastic ways to encounter and share Jesus within and beyond the Mass,
3. Bring youth in the Church—Music, Worship,
4. To renew and strengthen each other through the love of Christ and an openness to change,
5. To provide encouragement and opportunities for lay people in formation, public witness and unity with other people of faith so we may lead others by way of example in mission to faith,
6. Focus on Jesus plus create community,
7. To be fearless in reaching out to other denominations and with the help of our present day educated clergy,
8. May the Lord help the Catholic Church further engage with the general public about all our services and to have parishes further teach and engage the Words of the Lord and the Holy sacrament,
9. For women to be included in decision making in the Church,
10. The need for Evangelisation in the faith and sacraments for all,
11. Strong family connection to teach the children how 'to be' interact with family and outside,
12. Help young people to get involved in Church organisations like St Vincent de Paul and Rosies,
13. Take care of children/youth/Mass/Outreach Groups,
14. Bringing younger generations back to their Catholic faith.

PRELUDE: Felt "Losses" in the current Church climate:-

- Major loss of clarity in teachings (Commandments, and Jesus' exhortation to love and respect life, are often drowned out in today's secular environment e.g. abortion issue).
- Major loss of credibility (cover-up of clerical abuse; alienation of the young; bureaucracy-driven policies leading to a "values-disconnect" between service provision and profit motive in Church organisations).
- Major loss of confidence (in Church leadership, especially the corporate "middle management", including our own Archbishop). There is a strong feeling that our current (celibate) bishops and clergy are "out of touch". They do not speak to our needs in an ever-changing secular landscape. Having apologised for bad governance, leadership now needs to ACT, genuinely, with inclusive representation at all levels, within our communities.

VISION: Given that the Body of Christ (the Church) is a sign of "Christ's reign" here and now, its membership, from parishioner to Pope, is called to be transparently welcoming and inclusive, building community through acceptance, forgiveness, and self-giving love, reflecting Jesus' own example.

God is asking our Church to redefine our dedication to a righteous, honest and just life. I also firmly believe that God is telling us all that self-flagellation (without end) is counterproductive. I am sure God is aware that significant human problems have hurt the Church but it is also time to stand up against constant diabolical vilification and show some spine. For too long the Catholic Church has been the Whipping Boy of all and sundry and I believe God is telling us all to stand tall, stand firm and fight back against constant vilification.

Priestly formation, life and professionalism: 1. There is an imbalance in the training and education of priests. The need is for better balancing this with: training and experience for more life skills such as; managing finances and parish business, preparing and delivering good homilies and preaching, leadership methods, people management, running meetings and pastoral engagement. What is current thinking is being a parish priest. 2. Life: generally the young person with a vocation enters the seminary and experiences community life and living. There is fellowship, friendship and sort of family. Then after their ordination they are sent off on their own and will eventually end up in a parish living in a Presbytery on their own! This is very unhealthy for the human person and could lead to inappropriate behaviour. This life method has no accountability and no place for vulnerability. Some of our current issues as Church are the fruit of this isolation and loneliness. Why do we persist in leaving these men on their own? 3. Professionalism: priesthood ministry is pastoral, they should live and work with best of practice standards. Each year they should seek to achieve update in training or Professional Development in the above mentioned areas of life. More importantly they need to have supervision and document so many hours per year in professional supervision. This can take two forms—one on one and group methods. This has a multi layered effect: They experience fellowship with others. They can listen to other priests about how they have moved through difficult times, managed various personalities of parishioners and ask and receive prayer and help immediately. This is face to face contact with fellow travellers of similar vocation and interests. This is very human and necessary for normality in life. They therefore are more accountable in their ministry and work, and this can create sharing and openness. The feeling of not being alone. Everyone needs to be measured and accountable to someone regularly. This will be foreign to most priests and some may not like the exposure of opening up to others in a group thus the possible need for one on one as well, but with a good group leader, members become more comfortable with the new way of doing things. This takes time, patience and prayer. It will be hard but it is absolutely necessary. Groups are usually up to 6 members who meet once a month/quarter with an accredited professional supervisor. One on One can be as needed. There are many EAP (Employee Assistance Programs) that could assist in the funding of such personal programs and attending the needs of the individual. If the priesthood is to be effective and impact the lives of others in a positive way they need to work on themselves. The basic principle here is—to do the Outer Work one needs to do first the Inner Work!

Parish Life, Health and Vitality—The drop in Church attendance numbers especially in the 16 to 25 category and the 25-45 range is of great concern. It should be noted that MEN are the fastest diminishing demographic. Why is this happening and what can we do about it? There has been much postulated around the Why but very little has been done to speak to the How! I think God is asking us to ACT and to do something new. It is intolerable that we would continue in the same old manner and expect a different outcome. There have been many studies by Churches in regards to why people come to Church and how to retain them. The main point across the research suggests that the most important thing to drawing and keeping people in Church is predicated upon the quality of the Proclamation!! We must not tolerate mediocrity in the pulpit! The liturgy of the word is the primary way we can move hearts and minds. The proclamation is the primary pathway to attracting and keeping people in our churches. If we do this one thing so much better we will see growth and the health and vitality of our parishes will improve. The Mass

should be a liturgy of irreplaceable nourishment for the people of God People of God. The essential objective is that the People of God rediscover the beauty of Encountering the Lord! And in doing so Love and Worship him. This is Mystology!! A high percentage of the Homilies each week are of a low to poor standard. If this is one of our standards we have failed. Our priests need to be better formed and trained in the preparation and deliver of cogent convincing and meaningful messages. If they cannot preach they should NOT! It is doing much harm. If we don't have enough quality preachers then we must be creative, possibly by: using the laity (there are many great preachers in this country); use professional video production and stream into each parish each week; have regional preachers that cover a number of Masses; use the ecclesial movements and probably many more options if we intentionally thought this through. As a long term investment in this very important need we should train into our values. We need way better training for our priests in the liturgy of the word. We either train for better proclamation or we do it another way. WE CANNOT TOLERATE ANY MORE POOR Proclamation!! It is Church destroying! "How then are they to call on him if they have not come to believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard of him? And how will they hear of him unless there is a preacher for them?" Rm 10:14 UNLESS THERE IS A PREACHER FOR THEM!! We need: "New Ardour, New Methods and New Expression" STJP11 Only concrete and effective measures will impact the Mission. Other areas that need to be looked at for the improvement of the health and vitality of parishes are: Quality Worship/Welcome/ Pastoral Engagement/Effective Leadership Structures/Missionary mentality/ Involvement of the Laity as Co-Responsible missionaries.

I think God is asking us to be—

- *more accepting of people who are LGBTI within the Church,
- *more inclusive of women in leadership roles,
- *more accepting of married clergy; ideally in the longer term as priests, both male AND female. In the near future we should allow an increasing number of Deacons to be trained to help in all parishes; both male and female, with their choice to be married.
- *less judgemental of people who have had to divorce,
- *more generous,
- *for the Mass to be less formal, as it may alienate some people; a more simple Service using everyday language (not words like 'consubstantial!'),
- *Perhaps Homilies sometimes from Lay Catholic preachers.
- *When my children were at primary school they were taught 'WWJD?', 'What would Jesus do?', it was a wonderful reminder of Jesus' message.

Honesty, compassion, thoughtfulness, generosity, humility and prayerfulness.

We are being asked to keep the Catholic faith in the face of terrible crimes committed by people who should be protecting our most vulnerable not taking advantage of them. We are being asked to help guide the direction the Church and our faith needs to take to seek out the evil in our midst and bring those evil doers to justice, not sweep it underground. We need to regain our faith in those people in control of our Church including our Pope.

I think God is asking Australians to be faithful to the Gospel message by being people who:

- work tirelessly to bring about a society in which there is no tolerance for any form of emotional, physical or sexual abuse,
- develop a deeper connection with all of God's creation, treasuring and caring for it as stewards,
- listen to, learn from, and respect those who for thousands of years have walked on and are deeply connected to this great south land,
- are loving, caring and compassionate, particularly of the very young and of the aged among us,
- are inclusive and accepting of difference,
- honour and acknowledge each other's religions, customs and stories,
- welcome and show hospitality to people from all nations,
- show respect for and offer friendship to those whom previous generations may not have accepted or understood,
- explore and support educational and mentored pathways for the young—enabling and encourage them to participate more fully in all aspects of society, especially gainful employment,
- are conscious of the good and bad aspects of the electronic age in which we now live,
- act and speak out against injustice of any kind—fight for basic human rights in particular,
- proactively promote and take part in community initiatives to give the poor and oppressed a hand up rather than a handout,
- lead the way internationally by initiating changes to eliminate the chasm between the rich and the poor,
- continue to provide finance and expertise in areas of medical and other scientific research,
- are prayerful and contemplative,
- humbly repent and ask for forgiveness for the wrong doings of the past with respect to the treatment of Indigenous Australians and other minority groups.

God is asking us to lead a good Christian life, leading by example and demonstrating love, faithfulness, compassion and acceptance of people's differences.

I think God is asking for change ... change in the way the Church is run starting from the top. Those leading our faith communities need to be above reproach and have the spiritual welfare of parishioners at the very heart of everything they do and say. We cannot have leaders who do, or allow, dreadful things to happen to parishioners or non-parishioners. I am reminded of the Pharisees. As long as the face we show the world is pious, it doesn't matter what is happening in secret. Here are my recommendations: 1. As in any large organisation, there needs to be accountability. In the matter of sexual abuse within the Church, those who shielded and moved perpetrators are equally culpable. This needs to be addressed now and into the future. 2. Authoritative decision making needs to be devolved downwards. I believe the Pope should be our spiritual leader, but there should be more decision making at a local level. This must include the

laity. The laity needs to be central to everything. WE are the Church. 3. There needs to be two way communications. In Australia (and most of the western world), there is disengagement with spirituality. Educated people won't blindly follow and that is healthy. We need to be able to question and know we are being heard. 3. Priests and nuns need to be able to marry—full stop without question! 4. Women should be able to become priests. 5. The third rite of reconciliation should be re-instituted.

Christian outreach in a context of 'loving thy neighbour'. Demonstrated through a welcome and tolerant Christian community, with action as a key priority.

In essence God is asking us to love God and love our neighbours. God is asking us in Australia to be more open and inclusive. This means that: There needs to be a better relationship between clergy and laity particularly women; The formation of religious needs attention—women and men should be able to be ordained; The hierarchical structure of Church needs to be readdressed—we are all created equal in the eyes of God; The laity needs to be heard—there is a feeling of cynicism even about the Plenary Council; The approach to Marriage and divorce needs to be readdressed—annulment should be abandoned and the Church should recognise divorce; We need to open up our doors wider and be welcoming to all people—heterosexual and homosexual; Women should have a greater voice and be given voting rights in the Church—we find that it is appalling that women religious representatives to the Plenary Council DO NOT HAVE VOTING RIGHTS; We need to be more responsive to the care of the environment and all of creation; There can be recognition of the ministry that is accorded to religious is necessary; however the medieval dress of religious and outdated language needs to be improved; Language needs to be inclusive in our rituals and We should question the validity and effectiveness of World Youth Day.

Get our act together, STOP the cover up that is going on in the Church. If any, priest, bishop, cardinal, or any other religious person is found guilty of these crimes they should be removed from the Church immediately.

To rebel against Rome by demanding that women and married men may take on any roles within the organisation for which they are suited.

I believe God is asking us to become a Church that very much relates to the teachings of Jesus—loving, forgiving, simple and pastoral. He would want us to discard much of the pomp, wealth and control that our modern day Church still displays and come back to the simplicity of the Gospel message. The Church leadership—bishops, cardinals and Vatican bureaucrats seem unaware and unconcerned of the lives, struggles and worries that beset the people in the pews. The meeting of bishops just concluded in Rome again gave out the message that the Church does not "get it". Rows upon rows of mainly old men dressed up in outdated regalia supposedly there to help solve the sexual abuse tragedy that a lot of them previously tried to hide. Where were the highly qualified professional women and men to add some substance to the debates? I think God expects us to include married men and women to the clerical state because at present we only have a very limited talent pool from which to select our ministers of the Eucharist. I believe God wants His Church free of clericalism and our synod should support Pope Francis in his endeavours.

To renew our sacramental practice.

<p>Be more compassionate to refugee and asylum seekers. To take real action in addressing the sexual abuse cases—pay compensation to the victims. It is my understanding lawyers paid by the Church are challenging the cases. These victims have suffered enough! Speak out for those who are voiceless. Be a power for love and peace—acknowledge the pain caused in the past and show real leadership in the 21st Century.</p>
<p>To understand and love each other unconditionally.</p>
<p>To come together as Christians with our faith life centered strictly on the teachings of the Bible.</p>
<p>As a teacher of Religion in a P-12 Catholic College, I see the importance of recontextualising liturgy that speaks to the hearts and minds of our young people. They are keen to engage when it connects to their cultural understanding, is lively yet still provides time for stillness, when you take time to clearly relate to the three worlds of the text mourned scripture and make reference to the relevance to our lives today. Contemporary music and imagery is essential, we no longer live in the 19th century. Young people really appreciate good liturgy.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to accept the sinner not just the virtuous into our Catholic family.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be a Church for forgiveness, hope and love, and with that I want the Catholic Church to have a public call for reconciliation for the LBGTQI+ people of Australia.</p>
<p>To love our neighbour including the refugees, Muslims, and other outcasts, gay and bisexual, transgender, HIV positive, the elderly, the disabled, the drug addicts, the abused. To love as Christ loves, to be open, welcoming and supportive.</p>
<p>I feel God is asking us to be a Church of complete love and surrender for him. Opening our hearts and our doors to everyone leaving judgement, criticism and discrimination behind. We must be a Church that offers kindness and a refuge for all whom are seeking it. Leave the rest to God to sort out between the individual and our creator. We must be a people of trust in an awe inspiring God. Families need to be together in their faith, so this means that the Church should be a body that caters for every age, sex, and need of the ordinary family so they can unite and strengthen under the faith of their God and the Catholic Church. We need to stand out to all others as a pro-life organisation supporting particularly the weak, hurt, isolated, abandoned, sick, desperate and needy of our society. Our all-encompassing compassionate Lord will provide for our needs as a Church whilst we go about his business reaching out to the people of Australia, with the nourishment of the Eucharist. This will create a renewal and a love for God that no other has ever seen, if only we put our trust in him. Who wouldn't, after all he is GOD.</p>
<p>I think the Church in Australia is being called to: Be committed to the faith and doctrines of the Church. In a changing culture, the Church needs to be unchanging in the message it offers. At the same time, the Church needs to ensure that the message is being put across in a welcoming way. Truth never changes, but we will never convince people of the Truth by purely throwing stones. The Church needs to ensure it does not lose sight of its traditions. Transcendent beauty in liturgies and music, reverence (especially towards the Eucharist), and traditional public displays of faith (like Corpus Christi processions) all provide a contrast to the busy, loud, empty culture that can surround us. The Church needs to offer an alternative, not parrot the World with a Jesus-themed tint. This can't mean the Church completely shuts itself out from the world, in little Amish-style</p>

communities. But by showing beauty, and reverence, and transcendence through the Mass, through music, through public displays of faith, the Church can be a sign of contradiction in an often ugly, irreverent, and mundane world. Finally, the Church needs to truly, forcefully, loudly, push its social teachings. The Social Magisterium of the Church is rich, nuanced, and truly has something to offer people, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. The ACBC's statements on refugees, and the Social Justice Council's statements on the economy, are both great starts. But so much more could be done. Importantly, the Church needs to ensure that it does not become associated with political parties that peddle economic and immigration ideologies so at odds with the message of Christ and His Church. At a time when the environment is in peril, changing workplaces are leaving more and more behind, and both major parties still support inhumane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, the Church's teaching on social issues is needed now more than ever.

"What do you think God is asking of us in Australia?" I think God is asking us to reach out to the broader Australian Christian community. That is all those people in Australia who label themselves as Christian on census night even though they have never been to a church. The Catholic Church should make an easy way for them to become part of the fold. They need to know whether the Church believes they can be saved even if they are not practicing Catholics. The Church needs to promote the daily readings. These are so packed with the wisdom and the fundamentals of our faith that people can't help but get a better understanding of it as well as a desire to know more about it. Who will be saved The broader Christian community needs to know if the Catholic Church believes they can be saved if they are not practicing Catholics. The Catholic Church needs to be clear on who it considers will be saved. My parish priest said that Vatican II or III established a principle that deemed that not only Catholics go to heaven. It was that all people who live a life that is in accordance with God's teaching will go to heaven regardless of their faith. Bishop George Pell when bishop of Australia when pinned down by an interviewer on national television said the same thing as my parish priest. You don't have to be Catholic to go to heaven. If this is the truly the belief of the Catholic Church this is a game changer. It means that the Catholic religion offers a path to heaven. But It does not offer the only path. If this is true it broadens the meaning of that Gospel text where Jesus says the only way to the father is through me. A traditional Catholic Church interpretation of this would be the only way to the Father is through the sacraments and being a regular Church goer. While the broader meaning would be that If you live a life where you obeyed Christ's over reaching commandment "love of your neighbour" then you will be saved. With this broader meaning the Catholic Church would have a broader role. It would set the rules of what is within the scope of love your neighbour to a broader Church, not just Catholics but all those in the secular world aiming to live a "love your neighbour life". It already has this as a de facto role now when it takes a position about practices like abortion, or immigration policy. Promote the daily readings. Anyone who reads the "Today's Reading" on the United States Catholic Bishops website each day would without a doubt be drawn to the faith and would establish a sound knowledge of the faith. These should be read each day at every Catholic school. They should be published in the main papers of every capital city in Australia.

Caring for others and the world we have been given.

Truth, Justice, Compassion, Integrity, Transparency. To be in tune with the Holy Spirit. All priests that have abused minors should be handed over to the authorities to face the full force of the law and maybe through the remaining life of suffering and true repentance there might be a glimmer of hope that they won't go to hell. Yes a Holy and true task force protecting children and those most vulnerable. Ethics and morality needs to be instilled back into the Catholic Church community from the ground up. No abuse mentality. The protection of women and their purity through the guidance of The Virgin Mary. True genuine Catholic marriages have so much red tape to go through that it takes many months to get married. People should be able to get married within a week if necessary as it is a torture to keep apart what God has united in Love. That is the marriage between a man and a woman is sacred and Holy and should be protected at all cost. The rainbow is a sign of God's Covenant between us and should be reclaimed to its true and original meaning which has been held hostage and deformed by enemies of the Church. A day of prayer for marriages and families. A guide on what to look out for at Mass to protect the Holy Eucharist from desecration from those who don't consume the Eucharist and hold it captive to whatever plot—Church authorities must be notified immediately to prevent any sacrilege from occurring. The altar is Holy and should only be touched by the priest. Jesus paved the way making it possible for us to be free from every sin thus end emphasis on God's grace protection and compassion in the sacrament of Reconciliation if used wisely can refine and purify the soul to the point whereby the soul is made Holy in Jesus and no longer is inclined to sin. The young are left defenceless at times as Hope is paramount based on truth such as the fact that times in our lives when we are struggling to survive and in those moments God is lifting us up holding us in the palms of his hands carrying us and shielding us in his Love and Fatherly protection against all ills and carrying us through whatever trial or temptation. Maybe if there is continual problems within a community of brothers being so isolated there should be an Avenue to get married to a sister only under strict and Holy orders of the Church and true to all catechism teachings on wisdom in chastity waiting for the one then marrying.

As Catholics I believe, God is asking us to be open and transparent in all matters within the Church establishment. Also, the Church establishment should be more proactive in including parishioners in decision making; in particular ordination of Church leaders on all levels.

EVANGELISATION OF THE YOUNG: Our young people are turned off because their formation in our schools is more cerebral than experiential [of God]. Once they receive the sacraments of initiation, they switch off, if they were really ever switched on. This reflects the lack of religious commitment in their own homes, so we have a two-pronged problem. Senior students in our schools are more attracted to the "liturgies" of other Christian groups. Post school, there is no outlet for their social and spiritual concerns in the parish. Youth ministries need to be run by youth in their own parishes and not depend on diocesan groups or the clergy [or religious for that matter]. Clergy/religious may be there to help but not control. Young people know what they need. Our top heavy ways do not answer their need.

A Church that truly reflects the teachings of Jesus and the example of Mary Mackillop, mercy, compassion, tolerance and charity.

God is asking us to face our demons—systematic child abuse in all institutions, systematic cover up of that, our colonial past that borders on genocide of the Indigenous Australians. God is asking

us as Australians and followers of Jesus to admit our mistakes and do something, not just talk, do something to rectify the mistakes. God is also asking us to treat refugees and asylum seekers as human beings just like us. God is asking all of us to take action on climate change, to put pressure on politicians as they are the ones who are dragging our legs. As a faith community, we have to work with other faith communities towards compassion, justice and fairness.

God is asking us to be authentic to Gospel teaching. To be inclusive, compassionate. To review and reflect on our faults in order to flourish into the future.

Allow woman deacons, allow married priests, allow 3rd rite of reconciliation.

To be a humble and caring Church that fully acknowledges human weakness and sin within the leadership and laity. To recognise and accept that women are no more sinful than men. It is long overdue for Women to be included within the formal leadership of the Church. Our historic patriarchal model does not fit well with equality and fairness. It has been left to the secular world to lead the way in trying to redress centuries of bias against and subjugation of women. The Holy Spirit is ready to bring about real and lasting gender balance to our leadership. All that our male hierarchy need to do is listen to the people who are desperate and ready for change. We don't need an all women leadership, we need a good mix of men and women. All are equal in God's eyes. Women have not brought the Church into disrepute through abuse of authority, sexual abuse of the children etc. Renewal brings change and perhaps change can bring renewal.

To really use the opportunity associated with the Plenary Council to bring about generational change in how we are Church. For the powerful hierarchy in the Church to submit to the will of God and become humble. For all those in positions of power in the Church to lead gently and with a servant heart. The Church needs the people and the people need the Church.

I can do no better than quote Bishop [-] in his address of 18/8/2016—" Hence, it is time to reclaim for the Church: Less a role of power, dominance and privilege but more a position of vulnerability and powerlessness; less an enclosure for the virtuous but more an oasis for the weary and downtrodden; less an experience of exclusion and elitism but more an encounter of radical love, inclusiveness and solidarity; less an attitude of "we are right and you are wrong" and more of an attitude of openness to truth wherever and whoever it is to be found; less a leadership of control and clericalism but more a diakonia of a humble servant exemplified by Christ at the Last Supper; less a language of condemnation but more a language of affirmation and compassion; less a preoccupation for its own maintenance but more a concern for the kingdom of God.

We believe that we, clergy and laity, need to be acting out of spiritual poverty rather than conscious humanistic control and thus believing that God is able to bring order out of chaos; That we all repent as in the time of Nineveh forgiving one another, including ourselves after appropriately being contrite; That we acknowledge our need of God and surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit; That we live in authentic daily communion with God and others based on prayer, the Word and servant ministry; That our joy in the Lord is readily communicated to others within and outside our Church; That we be a welcoming community in word, action and deed, at home, at work and at worship.

I think that God is asking us to be inclusive of all types of people—age, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation. Holy Eucharist is deeply spiritually embedded in our Catholic faith and, unfortunately many people are not able to partake in this blessing. Thus many people turn away from the Church or take the Eucharist and tell only those trusted friends around. Staying in the Church as a divorced person requires faith and commitment and I believe that God is asking of each one of us in Australia today to stay in the Church and have that faith and commitment.

We need to show God's love to all people and be responsible for our own actions. We need to listen and show God's love through our actions and how we show respect and acceptance of one another. The Church should be an example of God's love for the world.

More openness from the clergy, especially from the bishops. The Church has been through a dreadful time that has had major impacts on people and their faith. Many of the clergy have destroyed faith within due to their dreadful behaviour and then burying the facts and lying about the situations. The boys club has taken over. Jesus would be horrified at what has occurred. The actions are similar to the Pharisees—do what I say but their actions in many situations were the exact opposite. How can a priest remain ordained after these dreadful acts and then look parishioners in the eye and say I did not do it. What God is asking is this behaviour has to be dealt with in the proper manner. Judicially, honestly and with the best interests of the Church community in the forefront. I want my Church to move forward and grow, and this cannot happen until the hierarchy face the truth and take effective and prompt actions, and this must start with our Pope. It cannot be brushed under the carpet any longer and if that means priests are defrocked then so be it. In fact, any priest who has been identified as a perpetrator should immediately be stood down.

We, the youth of [-] believe that God is asking the Church to be a renewed, transparent, down to earth Church, that does not care about money, clericalism. [-] Youth believe in that the Mass, should be renewed in a way that the service will make it seem, that we are cherished there by discussing struggles and giving lay-people more involvement to the Church, through prayer teams, layman homilies, Masses that doesn't make it a performance about the priest, but a worthwhile experience to the community. [-] youth also believe that the role of women in leadership roles should be in high-priority, maybe not increasing the clerical roles for women; perhaps, that is down the line, but to enable women to have positions in power within parishes and diocesan roles. We also believe that God is asking the Catholic Church to be a more transparent Church that focuses on serving the poor, not by maintaining profits. We believe in a public apology and active reconciliation attempts for people who have experienced hate among the Church such as people who are LBGTQI+. We believe in open transparency especially during the sexual abuse crisis that this Church is facing. This is what we believe that God is asking Australia during these times.

I think our Churches are becoming harder. The response of the hierarchy to the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse is much to blame, in my opinion. The hierarchy, the clergy, have been shown to be guilty, to have abused the trust given them and the power they have had as authority figures. I feel they should accept the blame and take responsibility for themselves and leave the laity alone. The shepherds did wrong, not the sheep! In my parish, as others in the diocese, anyone who is willing to participate has to have a police check—going so far as international police checks! Even someone willing to read in the Mass has to pass a police check! The intrusion

into personal privacy is immense! What possibility has an ex-prisoner of becoming part of the Catholic Church? Will they want to? There are Churches that will receive them with warmth and friendship, such as Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. We, the Catholic Church, should be willing to make a person welcome too. Christ does. Let us be a kind, caring and forgiving Church. This is one of my requests then. Church, please lay off the laity! Let the authoritarian clerical rulers take responsibility for their own actions and the system that empowers them be rectified, please. Male dominated authoritarian clericalism, the model the Church has run on for hundreds of years is clearly being shown to be failing to set the world a good example of Christ's teaching in action. There needs to be recognition of the talents and abilities of women in leadership roles. The gifts of the Spirit needed to make the Body of Christ function well are not the exclusive property of the male gender! Priests can fail to make good decisions for a parish, then a few years later are moved on, leaving the parish to suffer from his actions. Another concern is about the words used in Mass. Specifically, the change a few years ago from: 'Lord, I am not worthy to receive you etc.' to 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof etc.' It is not a natural phrasing for native English speakers! Every Mass, my mind goes to the story of the Centurion who requested healing for his servant. Jesus would have been ritually unclean had he gone to his house. It was the servant, not the Centurion, the healing was requested for. I acknowledge that Jesus commends his Faith, like he did that of the Syro-Phoenician woman, but fail to see why this is the paradigm for the moment of Communion. 'I am not worthy to receive you...' seems much more appropriate to this intimate moment. Alternately, liturgy could be developed around the imagery of, say, Revelation 3:20! Christ knocking, entering and supping with a believer! Words that make sense to us native speakers of English are needed to help us communicate with God in Mass.

The Lord is calling the Church in Australia to remember that He is Lord our God, and to place our trust in him. To trust in the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ his Son and not to forget nor idly dismiss the salvation he won for us upon the cross. The Lord is calling us to trust in the transformative power of the Gospel, the Kerygma message of salvation, and to allow the Gospel to transform us in the love of the Spirit. The Lord in turn calls us to be trustworthy ministers of that Gospel, to be faithful disciples who will preach that Gospel to the world in word and action with integrity. We must acknowledge that majority of diocese and parishes are gravely failing in the mission entrusted to them by Christ to preach the Good News and make disciples. We must acknowledge the gravity of our failure, or we will not have the stomach to change. The baby-boomer generation holds near total control of near all aspects of the average parish life, despite that fact that the innovations of their generation have proved themselves demonstrably incapable of passing on the faith effectively. To this day they presume to speak for what young people want and need, projecting upon them their own teenage rebellion, while at the same time ignoring the voices of the faithful young people in their midst and ignoring the consequences of their well-intended but ill-conceived innovations. When we ask what we must do, let us not be driven by feelings, but by evidence of the Spirit working. Let us look to those communities amongst us who are visibly alive with faith and see how the Spirit is leading them. When I look around the Archdiocese of [-] for communities in which people lives are regularly being transformed by the power of the Gospel, and who are on fire to share the faith, I see two groups thriving who are often seen as opposed but who share so much: The [-] Community (born of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal) and the community of [-] parish, [-] which has grown around the [-] (a traditional Latin Mass

community). Both of these groups have grown despite opposition, suspicion, and antagonism from the wider Catholic community of the Archdiocese (though notably, with support from successive Archbishops). In contrast to the average parish, the Gospel is preached among them with conviction and zeal. There is general expectation that an encounter with the fullness of the Gospel will require changes in lifestyle and habits. They are both community focused. They both seek orthodoxy and the fullness of the faith, submitting to the Word of God with humility and thus allowing it to transform their lives. By the integrity of their words and actions they have proved themselves to be, on the whole, trustworthy. At the very least, I can trust them to actually believe the words that they say and at least try to combat any hypocrisy within themselves. Refer to attached for full response.

I think that the Spirit is asking us to read the signs of the times, here and now in Australia. The Spirit is calling us to recognise the gifts and leadership of women in a genuine way. The Church needs to recognise the full dignity and equality of women. Women's leadership and participation needs to be directly and explicitly fostered. Christ's Church should not remain the biggest boy's club on Earth. The Spirit is calling for us to truly consider the ramifications of our baptism, where all baptised exercise Christ's office as priest, prophet and king—not just the ordained. Real avenues for lay ecclesial ministry must be explored for the future of the Church. The Spirit is also, loudly, calling the Church hierarchy to explicitly recognise their culpability and accountability for the child sexual abuse crisis. It is not the fault of the laity. The clergy need to stand up and admit their accountability. As Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*, we need to foster a kinder, more spiritual Church. The Church has sadly become a legalistic, bureaucratic institution, which fails at being welcoming, loving, hospitable, inclusive, and above all, liberating. God's word and Spirit is liberating. The Church should be a place of liberation, not a place of shackles. After Vatican II, much of the fear motivation for attending Mass was removed—as was much fear around the sacrament of baptism, although that remains a confusing issue. However, the fear motivation has not yet been replaced with something else. There should be a love motivation—people should be impelled to participate and engage with Church weekly out of love, because it nourishes and liberates them, because it is where Christ's presence is most fully felt. Instead, the opposite is often the case. The liturgy and culture of the Church needs revivification. The Tridentine Institutional model of the Church does not have scriptural basis, nor basis in early Church tradition. The Spirit is asking for us to take seriously the reforms and vision of Vatican II and try to receive it into the life of the Church deeply, not just at a surface level. The Spirit is also demanding of us that there are more opportunities and encouragement for adult faith formation. Too many Catholics in the pews (although that number dwindles!) have fundamentalist or heretical beliefs. The Institutional Church and hierarchical clergy leads to treating laity like infants, not as baptised brothers and sisters. Education and open spaces for discussion of theology, faith, and spirituality is needed. I also believe the Spirit is calling for the Church not to forget ecumenical relations. The Church is the People of God, and a partial but real communion exists amongst all baptised. Many of the challenges we face are not unique to the Catholic Church. Rather than neglecting ecumenism, or competing with each other, we should take seriously the bonds of baptism and offer opportunities for ecumenical engagement and learning.

We think God is asking for a fuller response to the historic Church Sexual Abuse Scandal that brings peace and healing to the entire Church. God is also asking the Church to be more proactive in bringing people back to a Church that is relevant and an authentic witness to Christ's teachings. A Fuller Response to the Historic Church Sexual Abuse Scandal: As part of this response, the Church ought to put into place mechanisms of healing, not just of safeguarding. We should not be in a hurry to get the issue behind us and forgotten. The abuse has hurt us all too deeply and the issue needs to be worked through. This response should be quite visible and would be a part of being an authentic witness to Christ and His teachings. • Every parish or Deanery should have a Program to minister to those affected by historical Church abuse. The Program should include some process, developed by parishioners with the priest and Archdiocese, for healing for the whole community. • The Church needs to be visibly active in healing, not just prayerful, though that is important too. For example, the Church should identify the impact on those abused, be it homelessness, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction, etc. The Church should develop a process to help address these impacts and put resources, both physical property and financial, towards healing. It is important in this that the Church's actions be visible, to show the Church's intentions with regard to proper reconciliation (saying "sorry" is not enough) and humility. • The Church should be more transparent in what the process is in priestly and religious formation that will reduce the likelihood of future cases of abuse. Being Proactive in bringing People back to a Church that is Relevant: It is clear from the empty pews in our churches and the lack of young people in attendance that many see the Church as irrelevant to their everyday lives. Some of this, of course, is due to the secular push of society. However, some can be attributed to the Sexual Abuse Scandal. It is also partly due to the fact that people are not finding enough support/guidance for how they can bring their faith to bear on the issues they face each day or even perhaps in the crisis moments of life. Some of it is also due to a lack of visibility for all the good the Church does in helping people. To tackle this issue, the Church needs to look outside of itself, both in developing mechanisms to reach out to others and in improving its communication processes/skills. • The Church should play a more active and visible role with Social Justice issues: o For example, the Church should direct more resources to help address homelessness and the issues that lead to homelessness. o The Church should be more visible in its support for refugees and asylum seekers o Similarly for Indigenous peoples, to those isolated in the Outback.

We think God is asking the Church to develop mechanisms to promote the knowledge and practice of a stronger Catholic Culture that benefits and supports the faithful spiritually on their life journey. Such a culture should help people live their everyday lives in the presence of God; it should help the faithful be committed, authentic witnesses to Jesus Christ; and it should help us reach out to all Australians, believers and non-believers, in a loving, inclusive way. The mechanisms developed to teach and promote Catholic faith need to be multifaceted to show its relevance to all ages and all groups and to help build the supporting connectivity between people. In order to go forward in a meaningful, authentically Christian way, we need to go back to the basics of our Catholic faith and ensure that strong foundations are laid early in life and are reinforced throughout life's journey.

On the composition of the Council: that there is a good proportion of faith-filled lay women participating. On governance of the Church: That women should not be regarded as spectators

but as active members of decision making bodies of the Church. Perhaps a role for women deacons as there was in the early Christian Church. The Eastern rite allows married priests. There is a strong need for repentance for everyone. Reintroduce the Third Rite of Reconciliation and recognize family discord and disharmony need healing as well as dishonesty in dealings with others in the business of everyday life. We all have failings in living the Christian ideal. (Luke 6:27-38 Gospel of the 7th Sunday Ord time On Catholic education: Perhaps an overemphasis on social justice and immersion for high school children and not enough spiritual development. Their relationship with God needs to be strengthened. More spiritual nourishment for adults—visiting lecturers and theologians often only address selected or invited groups. A deepening of the encounter with Christ. Inclusivity concepts need to be widened. (Gospel of the day 03/02/19). Better deals between diocesan authorities and religious orders who sell property on the open market—a loss of land and building sites for the Church. A lament over the choice of consecrated religious who have played such an important part in the fabric of the Australian Church who have opted for secular dress—their distinctive habits (in modernised form) no longer giving witness to their sacrifice of the vowed life with its intensive prayer practice in their daily routine.

That our Catholic Church develops a transparent and accountable leadership that is representative of the whole community, including male, female, different nationalities, persons with different abilities and different sexual orientations. That we focus on the connection between our Catholic schools and our Churches to engage our youth, their parents and their teachers to become active members of our Church.

God is asking us to remain steadfast in the traditions of the Church (e.g. liturgy) and its unchanging moral stance on topics such as abortion, euthanasia, divorce and homosexual actions (note: emphasis on "actions"). The Church hierarchy should not be relativist, but absolute on enforcing the Church's stance on such issues. Its communication of our beliefs to the world should show mercy and compassion to non-Catholics, but each and every Catholic should unequivocally understand the Church's teaching on such issues. We should always strive to be counter-cultural rather than "change with the times".

Pray for a successful outcome to the Plenary Council, with our bishops truly listening to the voices of the laity, To look outward, not inward and reshape the Catholic Church, To accept the blame for our failings, mistakes and complacency and move forward making the necessary cultural changes, For the Church hierarchy to be prepared to delegate and trust in our laity. To give women, youth and our young adults opportunities to become integrally involved in the everyday life of our Church, including roles of leadership and decision making. To become a welcoming and humble Church to all, to serve our communities.

I believe that God wants us to make a priority of ensuring that all Catholics have made an adult response to God. That they have responded appropriately in the process of becoming adult Catholics in the Church to the grace of God given them in the sacraments of initiation... Specifically I am referring to the section on Justification in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This points to a great deal more than a passive acceptance that I am a Catholic because of my parent's beliefs. I am saying that the sacraments of initiation are a necessary but not sufficient condition for

justification. Without justification a human being is without the power to live the Christian life, surrendered to Jesus.

- To be present, but more importantly, to engage more with people outside the Church in a creative, direct and obvious way. Examples I have of this tangible and effective evangelisation I have experienced and been involved in are through events like 'Night Fever' (in [-], Australia) and through street evangelisation i.e. door knocking groups and going anywhere people can be found. In short, I believe the Holy Spirit is asking the Church to go from a maintenance mindset to a mission mindset. We need to maintain our Churches, but the most fundamental focus should be on mission and making disciples, who are equipped and sent on mission, otherwise the Churches in the future will have nobody to properly maintain them.

- In relation to the above point, I also believe the Holy Spirit is asking the Church to use its strengths. More specifically, our pastors and leaders need to help each other and the rest of the assembly to recognise their gifts and talents so that parishes and communities can flourish. People thus need to be empowered, wanted and constantly encouraged to share their gifts and talents to glorify God and build the kingdom of God e.g. music talents, leadership ability (leading ministries), sporting talents etc.

- Greater catechetical opportunities in parishes and schools. People are craving to learn more about our own faith. This will give the people of God greater confidence in having conversations with strangers about our faith.

- For more parishes to get involved with acts of charity and mercy e.g. raising money for the poor through smart schemes like 'Containers for change.' When communities come together to be fed and nourished by the Eucharist there should be a strong connection with mission and sharing what we receive with the wider society, otherwise we risk looking like just another social club, who don't have much concern for those on the fringes of society. Not only do we risk looking this way, but we risk being authentic Christians, who are continuously being transformed and transfigured to Christ.

- Along with catechesis on our faith, Bible studies should be emphasized, particularly if we want to build more connections and dialogue with other Christians. Ecumenism begins with our similarities, but if many Catholics aren't somewhat versed in Scripture, then explaining our faith would risk being ambiguous, alienated and even separated from our faith.

I believe God is asking us to stop misrepresenting His purpose through our institutions, actions and words. He is asking for honesty, transparency and inclusiveness and to stop hiding behind policy, tradition and theology whenever a difficult issue arises. How sad He had to resort to legal avenues including the Royal Commission to force self-examination and Church reform. Many opportunities for internally driven reform have presented themselves but the ongoing aggression from those opposed to change has undermined every step forward starting in the parishes and going right through the ranks. There has rarely been a more blatant manifestation of the Holy Spirit in history than the frustration that resulted in the creation of the Royal Commission. Even in this Plenary Council process, well-meaning as it is, my experience of 5 listening sessions, has not come close to what this process is meant to achieve. Facilitators regularly homogenize the responses into bland motherhood statements or avoid the 'hot' issues by shutting them down. For

example, the issue of women priests in one session was diluted to 'an inclusive Church'—this is no way represented what was said in the session and could mean anything from inviting people to morning tea to letting a stranger take 'your' seat at Mass to the actual issue i.e. allowing women to be ordained as priests. The Royal Commission shone a light on failures of Church governance, yet the Church appears to have learnt little. It has focused on the context of the Commission but not the substance. Measures have been put in place to protect vulnerable people including children but fundamental changes to ensure accountability have not been forthcoming. The parish is the basic unit of the Church but most fail in governance in many ways—some apparently trivial, others very serious. It's all very well to collect police checks and blue card details in the Archdiocese but if the ladies doing the liturgical rosters are never given a list of compliant parishioners what is the point? And when the parish office finds a work around for those parishioners who won't comply—classify as 'ad hoc volunteers', no name on the roster—it makes a mockery of the process. Just because someone is 83 and 'lovely' it doesn't mean they are beyond the law. Until the Church addresses core governance it will continue to operate as an amateur organization, with all the risks inherent in poor management whether these are financial, human resource based or legal. Lack of professionalism and the failure to address poor behaviour at the parish level continues to drive away people in droves. It can only be assumed this amateurism is endemic in the Church at all levels or priests would address, not avoid, it. Good governance leads to fairer and more equitable treatment of people. This in turn makes them feel valued. Address the core issue of the Royal Commission and much of what God is asking of us at this time will be achieved.

1/ The Church needs to embrace everyone, particularly women, young people, Indigenous Australians and LGBT. Also take notice of the 'poor in spirit'.

2/ The Church should not be so bound by rules. People want to be part of a real community, not a rule driven institution.

3/ The Church needs to be more ecumenical. To realise that we have more in common with other faith groups and we should leave aside differences.

4/ Parishes will die out, unless the Church is more inclusive.

5/ It should not be an institution that judges, should imitate Jesus and be kind and reach out to all outcasts.

6/ The Church needs to be a relevant institution, meeting the needs of modern Australian culture.

7/ The Church needs to empower the laity, to take the message and mission into the world.

8/ The Church needs to utilise modern technology to connect with people. Also connect with people using everyday language.

9/ The institution needs to rejuvenate through lay leadership. Explore new ways of 'doing and being' Church.

10/ The Church needs to celebrate the good news stories and the contributions it has made in health, education and aged care.

11/ The Church needs to recognise that the sins of the past such as the sexual abuse of children are still being felt today. It is not just the high profile cases that need to be considered. The Church needs to stop dragging its feet and reimburse those who are due compensation. To accept the findings of the Royal Commission with more than platitudes. A need to revisit issues such as the training of priests, the culture of seminaries.

12/ It needs to remove the patriarchal theology that has overtaken our Church.

13/ Female leadership is the priority.

14/ The Church needs a leadership structure that allows male and female priests to be married.

15/ To increase education and care for the marginalised.

16/ The Church needs to build in 'joy' into the Church experience. Maybe needs to take note of the relative success of the Charismatic and Evangelical movements.

17/ How can we continue to lead ministry with the shortage of priests, especially in regional Australia?

18/ The Church needs to accept that in Australian society, the Catholic message is counter cultural.

19/ An issue with foreign priests, with specific reference to African priests. Not necessarily the language issue, rather the arcane theology that they come with. Out of step with modern Australia.

20/ Stripping away all hierarchy within the Church—a move to devolved, local leadership.

21/ The Church needs to understand the issues that Catholic schools face. Schools and Colleges are dealing with real life issues such as gay and lesbian parents, transgender students. Out of date patriarchal theology is irrelevant in these contexts.

22/ Catholic schools are successful in living the mission. The Church is not.

To stand up as Christians and admit our mistakes as a religion—our lack of compassion to victims of violence and sexual assault in the Church and our failure to address and punish perpetrators by hiding them and punishing their victims. God is also asking us to be driven by faith and love, not dogma or rules; to see what is happening in Christian Churches around us in their response to bringing God's love to people in a less judgmental way. God is asking that we as lay people take on guidance in the Church and that women, Indigenous people and other minority groups be appropriately represented and visible in the decision-making and life of the Church. The recent papal gathering in Rome of a whole lot of old men in fancy gowns wouldn't inspire any young person to think we know anything about how Australia and the world is made up. God believed in and Jesus preached justice and that requires equal access and representation for all. The current structures do not support this and need to be changed. Let priests administer the sacraments and let us all participate in the leadership and administration of the Church.

God is asking us to be a leader in a just society. For so long the Catholic Church has been the example, but unfortunately, we have lost our way in standing up for the less fortunate in many ways. We cannot claim to be a modern Church while ignoring the opinions of so many people. We

must find a way to be a genuine open Church. This includes positions of leadership for women and the laity.

God is asking us to do what He has always asked us to do: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This essential mission of the Church is quite simple: assist Christ in His work of saving souls. God is asking us, as He always has, to join His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in saving souls. That is the primary task of the Church and all Christians. We must remember that Jesus Christ entrusted to the Apostles in union with Peter the task of salvation. The Church today continues that work of saving souls, given that the Church is the Body of Christ on earth. So, therefore, God is asking of us a complete resignation to His divine will, that we may be better able to assist in the work of saving souls.

For the Catholic priesthood to have credibility those convicted of sexual abuse must be stripped of their priesthood. How can the people respect priests if they are wondering if the one they are dealing with could have a conviction? Priests should be listed on the Archdiocesan list for "at risk" Church positions and the training associated with it. They should be very much letting it be known as to the lengths they are going to be worthy of the position they hold. Segregating the priesthood from these measures promotes doubt.

The Catholic Church (Vatican) has done nothing to demonstrate it even understands God ... so I struggle to answer the question.

I believe that God has always asked us to love unconditionally. Unfortunately, I find that The Church puts too many conditions on its love.

To have a personal relationship with Jesus and to have this as THE basis of our Christian faith. To develop and foster personal holiness as our primary goal.

1. A renewed ecumenical effort. I believe Jesus must be horrified at how his Christian Church has splintered into so many denominations. How much stronger would our Christian Church be if we were all united, sharing the same problems and going forward with the same purpose. "Divided we fall".
2. The third rite of reconciliation should be the most common form practiced. This would protect our priests from malicious individuals and give the media less sacrilegious fodder. Additionally, speaking to other Catholics who have experienced it, we all seem to agree this form of confession is very uplifting, cleansing and uniting.
3. Parish Pastoral Councils should be more active and have more power.
4. Parish priests should be relieved of or given much more assistance from the diocesan head office for such matters as accountancy, architecture, law and general property maintenance. This would allow them more time for personal formation and pastoral care.
5. The poor and disadvantaged, which the Church has traditionally been good at helping are now being mostly well supported by government in Australia. The Australian Church should be focusing more on the causes and elevation of such things as loneliness, depression, drug addiction, and sexual abuse of women and children in society.

I think the same as always—for everyone to get along in peace and harmony and to focus on what valuable and helpful rather than keeping up with society
We are being asked to adapt and to change so that Jesus' mission and the Word of God continues to hold value and meaning for today's society. The world has changed and the Church needs to change with it.
Be flexible. Use those willing to serve. Jesus did not call scholars. Consider married priests, Women priests, Deacons—full and part time, women and men. Stop expecting priests to be ABLE to do everything alone. What can Laity do? There has been an overreaction to the Abuse. Be realistic. It should be about awareness raising. Perhaps there could be training through the Mass 5 or 10 minute segments/videos so ALL are aware.
God is asking us to live like Jesus. To stop and think, what would Jesus, do, say, think in this situation.
God is asking us to be more open, understanding and tolerant of each other.
To come together, united. To welcome everyone from all walks of life, to be an inclusive Church, embracing everyone as Jesus would, not excluding people as we have been doing.
<p>On Sunday 17 February, representatives of the community of [-] parish [-] engaged in a facilitated listening and dialogue encounter, considering the question What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? In recognising that few of the issues raised were new to discussion in the Church, the group indicated a sense of urgency in the crucial need for action in addressing these. Grateful for the opportunity to voice our concerns, we respectfully present the following priorities, discerned during that listening and dialogue process. We believe that the Church in Australia today needs to be relevant, inclusive and prepared to change.</p> <p>In terms of relevancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The laity needs to have a greater involvement in high level decision making in the Church. The culture of clericalism needs to be challenged. • There needs to be a greater focus on the contribution of all in the Church—women, men, youth, cultural influence. • The voice of ordinary people needs to be heard. • Be open, not defensive. <p>Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must be a Church of inclusion, compassion and forgiveness. Messages must be clarified. The truth of Jesus—his acceptance and outreach must be spoken. It is time for renewal. • Meaningful engagement of our young people. • We must continue to be a people of prayer, reflection and compassion addressing the context in which we live. • The Church of the future is reliant on connections and strong relationships.

Prepared to change:

- Be relational, accountable, respectful, show justice.
- Reclaim and restore trust and confidence.
- Address the past with genuine sorrow so that a positive future can emerge.
- Be people of integrity.
- Have the courage to be disruptive.
- Bring the lens of the gospels to a review of Church teaching (marriage, sexuality, contraception etc.). Be less bureaucratic in speaking the truth of Jesus I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.
- Greater leadership roles for women including ordination.
- Consider terms of commitment for priestly ministry (e.g. 20 years).

As a parish community, in the lead up to the Plenary Council, we will continue to explore the issues raised by providing opportunities to explore them further in meaningful discussion, to seek ways in which our parish can be proactive in enacting appropriate change.

To trust in the Risen Christ to steer us through this very trying time ... to believe that the grace will be given for all to emerge, RISE AGAIN, from the ashes of deep shame, embarrassment to be called "Catholic" to BE GOSPEL PEOPLE of JOY, COMPASSION, WELCOME, INCLUSIVITY, witnessing JESUS AND HIS VALUES.

Stop protecting paedophiles, and trust and respect the laws of the country to punish these false Christians. For too long not one person [in] power in this Church has responded in way that has gained any respect from us parishioners. This Church is out touch. Be more progressive in your actions.

To be faithful to the gospel, grass roots ministry, to listen and obey. To be fearless in evangelisation in the face of persecution. Bring back habits to religious orders and faithful to charism. Adoration.

God is asking us to be more responsive to the current needs and trends of the Church today. We are asked to share the responsibility for the Church, to empower the laity, for the clergy to trust the laity; for the clergy to focus on their ministry and allow the laity to lead areas of the Church that do not need the clergy to lead.

To create a truly multicultural, multi-racial society where we live in peace, friendship and love while reaching out to our fellow human beings throughout the world. Australia—'a beacon on the hill'. Truly the great southern land of the Holy Spirit.

To listen to the prophets of our time like: 1) Kevin Treston, author of *Who Do You Say I Am? The Christ Story in the Cosmic Context* and *The Wind Blows Where it Chooses*, 2) Fr Richard Rohr OFM, author of *Divine Dance* and *Universal Christ* and his words of wisdom in <https://cac.org/fr-richards-statement-on-the-new-revelations-of-priestly-abuse-and-coverup-2018-08-20/>

1. Cardinal Pell (and others with similar charges) should be stood down immediately and replaced. Why does Australia not have a Cardinal? Weak or no leadership!! 2. The closeness of school and

Church in Australia is a great idea but is wasted. There are about 200 children per year going through First Holy Communion and Confirmation at my parish. After that it seems that 99.9% are never seen again. My thoughts on the reasons: a. Religion as a spiritual subject should be the most important subject at school. But it is not... not sure why, my children said it is because Religion does not count towards the "OP score", while they studied the useless (in my opinion) subject of "Study of Religion", which studies World Religions (can you believe this) and counts towards "OP score". b. Children are being confirmed at too young an age. Once they are confirmed, there is no reason to attend Mass and are almost never seen again. They should be confirmed after puberty (at 16 years old) to ensure that they stay close to the Church during these crucial formative years. 3. If you really want to know what God is asking us, then I suggest appointing someone to review, categorise and draw statistics from the responses to Pope Francis' tweets. Amongst all the followers, there are many negative comments there. So, look there and see how those negative people can be helped and how the Church can change to better serve them...otherwise you may end up only getting responses from the "choir" for the Plenary Council.

Stay together in continuous prayer for our Church and their leaders. I also feel that God wants us to stay strong united against the attacks from evil that wants to destroy our Church.

God is asking of us to right the wrongs of the past, and to not turn a blind eye to the atrocities and hurt caused by those amongst us - particularly the sexual abuse performed by our most trusted clergy members. By not acknowledging and addressing this abuse, we deny what God is asking of us.

These points are what our group believes God is asking of the Church. 1. To treat with love and respect the many divorced Catholic people who wish to remain inside the Church but are not able to receive the Eucharist, and feel they are being blamed and rebuffed by the institutional Church. To find a way to bring them into the Church as loved members of the congregation. 2. We need more inclusivity in the Church: for lapsed Catholics who need help to 'come back'; for divorced people to be able to receive Communion; for Aboriginal and ethnic people to be made welcome. It was suggested a brief survey could be conducted at parish level asking lapsed Catholics and parents at Catholic schools why they don't /or rarely attend Mass. 3. Clericalism: Church needs to give greater power to lay people—involvement in decision-making processes; more women present and able to comment when bishops meet; we need to see the human being in priests and support them—not to put them on pedestals and treat them as though they can do no wrong; we need to stop treating priests as somehow extremely graced and special, as having received a special gift on ordination which sets them apart and superior as though their every word has to be obeyed. Priests' gifts and authority have to be appreciated but not revered as though "Father can do no wrong"; we need to stop denying that the Church as an institution can do no wrong. 4. We think that the Church has to go out in a personal way to those who have been abused by religious and clergy. This has to come with personal action from the top, the bishops. Charitable action not words, not money. Let's see our bishops and 'top' clergy out among the people as parish priests often are. 5. We believe that the rule of celibacy should be optional. That priests should be allowed to marry; that Catholic men already married should be allowed to become priests. We think that it is discriminating that priests and pastors of other denominations who are married should be welcomed as priests and Catholic men are not; those many priests and seminarians who

left the priesthood and their studies to marry should be offered to consider priesthood again. We also need to support our priests—it must be a lonely life. 6. We feel that there is misunderstanding in the community generally about the Catholic Church and we need to be more open; we need to be open to change also; we need to be more joyful, more loving as a community; and we need to pay our parish workers and not overwork them. 7. We believe that God would like the Australian Church to bring back the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. It gives us all as a whole community to be together and forgiven. 8. We think that God is calling us to give women a greater role in the Church, a more obvious role also; the role of women deacons should be progressed as the Pope has doing. 9. We are called to give more emphasis to youth and schools: youth clubs associated with sport, social activity, leadership.

For the “Truth” in all situations and at all times and the courage for all those who know the truth to come forward to speak that truth and to protect others. Jesus said ‘I am the way, the truth and the light, no one can come to the Father except through me’. Let this be our basis and foundation in all situations. Let the Holy Spirit and Jesus’ own words be our basis and guiding light as we move forward. If religious and lay ministers profess the truth at the outset of all situations, instead of cover ups and denials of the truth, then the faithful can seek forgiveness in their hearts for those that cause so much harm and damage to our Church before resentment of the Church and its handling of situations sets in and we’re left as believers to find explanations to the many who ask ‘why is your Church so silent on matters of abuse? Why have they covered up the truth?’ It is not a good look, and how does one try to convince children and grandchildren of a loving God when God’s own face on earth is demonstrating everything less than ‘love and truth’. That’s the first step in cleaning up the mess, is having the courage to very publicly demonstrate that the Church has absolutely zero tolerance for sexual predators and paedophiles and there is no place for them in the Catholic Church. To do anything less is seen as a show of arrogance not only to the rest of the world but also to practicing Catholics.

To clearly identify as, and return to the core values of, a Christian country.

To proclaim the Gospel in a more contemporary fashion applicable to the fabric of today's society.

Honesty and forgiveness on all levels. Focus on youth. To put our faith and trust in Him in all things. To be stronger in our faith. To stand together on such subjects as abortion, euthanasia, etc.. To learn to know more about our faith—e.g. through Apologetics, Alpha. To have perseverance and bravery of faith. Do not surrender our faith because what our faith brings is happiness. To be open and welcoming. To develop an understanding of all. To increase our prayer and spirituality. Respect the sanctity of life. Restore our sense of sin and having an informed conscience. To come back to family prayer. To be proud of our faith. To be open to other faiths. To be able to participate in duties within the Church. Help to evangelize. To be role models of the faith. Live out our faith. Support each other through family groups.

I think God is asking us to restructure the Catholic Church, right up to the very top level. There are too many people in positions of power that can't or don't relate to everyday people and the modern issues facing our world.

Acknowledge the Church is imperfect and not above other institutions by looking for the spirit at work. Keep our Church vibrant and going in the future by staying focused on the mission (leading people into growth relationship with Jesus) and be exceptionally innovative in our model.

1. To be ecumenical. 2. To be relevant to today's societal spiritual needs. 3. For priests to be allowed to be married. 4. For priests who have left the priesthood, due to wanting to be married, to be asked if they would like to be welcomed back to the Church, as married priests. 5. For women to be allowed to become priests (both married and single women).

Revive the Church in Australia, us Catholics to be brave and be true testimonies of our faith with our lives, go out on to the streets and join the gospel to our lives. Our actions are much stronger than our words. Work harder with the Youth to teach them the true meaning of Faith, God, The Church. Work harder with the underprivileged, the aging, the outcast, the lonely. The Catholic Church, us, needs to be in the streets working, we have become too complacent with ourselves and are losing too many Catholics to other faiths or nothing at all. Work harder at schools, especially Catholic schools whose teachers do not even know the meaning of their faith or Who God is. More dedicated chaplains at schools, hospitals, jails, shelters.

-I believe God is asking the Church religious and lay people to live John 15:5. We will give fruit only united to him. Therefore I would encourage the Church to have adoration to the Holy sacrament in every Church. Minimum 1 hr per week. Perpetual adoration would be ideal at least in one Church of every parish.

-I believe the word of God is very important to listen to every day. So implementing in every classroom a small liturgy with prayer and the daily gospel and a short reflection by the students and teachers would help them to come in contact with the Word every day.

- Teachers at school also need to be spiritually formed with retreats and frequent meetings. My daughter during her high school year had to teach her study of religions teacher to do the sign of the cross.

- As Catholic schools primary or secondary, they should be teaching Catholic faith not study of religions. Protestant schools teach their faith. Study of religions should be taught as a topic in another subject related.

- Priest at churches encourage families to pray at home, teaching the children to pray as a family, during meal times and beginning and end of the day.

- During assembly schools could start with the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory.

- Encourage Families to pray the Holy Rosary. And encourage grandparents to teach their children.

- To Consecrate the Catholic Church, families and religious in Australia to our Blessed Mother Mary.

- To consecrate Australia to our Mother Mary as well.

I think God is asking us not to be afraid of expressing our faith and setting a good Christian example. If something is in the media expressing a view about our faith that is contrary to Church

teaching it should be called out. We should be happy and joyful so that others will want to know what makes us happy.

I think God is asking us to return to our purpose for this life which is to know God, to reverence Him, to love Him and to Serve him and others. God created our world and then created us human beings to fulfil our purpose and to use God's creation to help us in this purpose. But we need to have the foundation and formation within which to do this so that we feel safe and feel secure in the knowledge that we have a solid structure working along with us on our journey towards a deeper commitment to God, guiding, teaching, admonishing when necessary through the sermons. We need to change our formation of children and priests so that they truly know their faith and can serve our parishes in love and without fear of hurting someone's feelings because they are strong in their faith, their knowledge of scripture, the sacraments and what they truly represent and understand the necessity for regular confession. We need to get back to the fundamental basics of our Catholic Catechism. There also needs to be more communication and dialogue and transparency between the priests and the parishioners regarding the running of the parish and the suggestions and proposals for faith growth in terms of Bible studies, retreats, etc., as well as encouragement from the pulpit to participate. I believe God is asking us as Catholics to return to the fundamental methods of worship such as exposition and adoration in all parishes. I also believe an embrace of the charismatic renewal is necessary as a means to revive the zeal and joy and life which is only found in true faith foundation alongside the reverence and praise of God our creator.

To know and love God, to reverence Him and to serve Him and others in his Church and to develop a personal relationship with Him. Spiritual renewal is vital as is reformation of the teaching in the seminary and retreats to enable our priests to live the holy lives they have been called to. The Life in the Spirit Seminars are a wonderful way to achieve this for priests, seminarians and the laity. The Holy Spirit is part of the Blessed Trinity and central to the Church so more should be done to enable greater conviction and joy as do the Pentecostal Churches. There should be a prayer group in every parish and more focus on Catechism. There should be home-grown resources such as a Catholic radio station for Australian Catholics to tune into for further formation in the form of apologetics, online praying of the Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy with phone in prayer requests, short Bible studies, etc.

Modernise the Church and the Mass offering. If this is not achieved in the next 20 years, no one will attend Mass anymore, look at the age cohort on a Sunday, the majority are 50 plus in age. There is no more meaningful outcome for the plenary council than to be 100% invested in attracting the next generation of children and those under the age of 30, to follow God, and to live a life focussed on faith in Jesus and service to others. Achieve this through recruitment and training of younger members in the community to be the next leaders of the Church. Empower young people to take the reins of the Church and lead it into the future. Let young people be the decision makers on key outcomes associated with the future of the Church. The Church needs to develop a new mission and value proposition based solely on investing its future in bringing young people into its fold. Much the same as a business will market and promote a product or service to a target market for sale. The Church currently does a poor job in promoting their products and

services to the broader community outside of the confines of the Church Walls. This is also a key problem when you think about it, given the core product and service offering, being the Church and a faith in God are completely free of charge. To overcome this, the Church needs to invest more in communication channels used predominantly by the wider community—social media, online TV, smart phone applications, promoted and used in schools and other channels where the Mass populous of young people exist. The balance between men and women and the roles they play in the Church is significantly in favour of women at present. The value the Church places on the role of men at Church, and as a leader of faith in the home also seems significantly undervalued. To overcome this issue, the connection between men and the stigma of being a man of God needs to be addressed at a societal level. Promotion needs to empower men and to give them a voice. Men need to feel that it is okay to be vulnerable, it is okay to ask God for help, you are not weak if you have a faith in Jesus, that it is okay to talk about God in your daily life. I know too many men today who have fallen away because they don't see the relevance in the Church, they can't see a role for them or any value in living a life of faith. What causes this? The message and the value offering for men, the opportunity for brotherhood with other men is all but non-existent.

To understand and undertake God's purpose for our life and in doing so to be a blessing to others.

Return Church to how Jesus lived in grace, love, poverty, humility and equality. Totally remove all power, privilege and position. No hierarchy! No one gender prevailing. Be authentic. Sell all buildings that reek of wealth (with their contents) like cathedrals and bishops' palaces. Use this money as Jesus Christ Himself would use it today in Australia. Lead the world.

- Much deeper sacramental program.
- Faith formation for teachers at Catholic schools.
- Genuine Catholic teachers.
- Faith formation for parishioners.
- Faith formation for parents whose children attend Catholic schools: the school needs to be used as an opportunity to offer Catechists in faith formation. If we can form the faith of teachers we can better develop the faith of children in schools.
- "Bring Christ to the Church". More Kerygmic preaching: the message of the Gospel needs to be clearly communicated from people with an adult faith, and from the pulpit. Families also need catechesis so the message can be a lived experience as opposed to empty ritual.
- More devotion to our Lady.
- Children to have adoration: Bring the boys to visit a seminary and the girls to visit a convent. Involve kids in the parish, not just for the sacramental Program.
- More solid teaching and a follow up program for youth groups.
- The faith needs to be transmitted primarily in the family.
- Review the structure of the parish to encourage less anonymous participation, perhaps by creating a community of smaller communities where people can get to know each other.

- Find ways to pass faith to children. Especially ways that speak directly to the lives of the children rather than rituals which are not properly explained or understood. To this end, believers need to be initiated to better understand the practises and doctrines of the Church. They also need to be encouraged to live their faith authentically so that the message transmitted is not only empty words but lived experience.
- Evangelisation and outreach to lapsed Catholics and those outside the Church.
- Provide clear teachings on Humanae Vitae from the pulpit and elsewhere as these teachings are not well understood and certainly not practiced by the majority of Catholic couples. Not only avoiding contraception, openness to life and "responsible parenthood" as taught by the Church.
- A National Shrine for Australia should be built somewhere important and inspiring for Australian. A place where Catholics and non-Catholic can go to pray for intercession. Perhaps somewhere important to the mission of St Mary of the Cross.
- A place for pilgrimage for a Saint or some significant events. Somewhere that is visible from a city.
- Invite teams of Catechists to give Catechesis in Catholic Universities. Not just teaching but evangelising. People need to hear true experiences, not just lessons/Bible lessons or social services. Knowledge about forgiveness needs to be spread to all.
- Need of more talk around becoming nuns or religious sisters.
- Priests need more support in the parishes from lay and clerical people of faith who can celebrate regularly and openly with them. This will encourage the formation of their own faith, reduce isolation and help safeguard their vocation.

The Church simply needs to continue to preach the gospel of God's love, but in new ways, and with a heightened emphasis on social action to demonstrate the sincerity of Church members. This suggested heightened level of social action is based on scripture, for example: • The Kingdom of Heaven having a yeast like effect on society, Matthew 13:33. • You are the salt to the world. But if the salt loses its taste, it should be thrown away, Matthew 5:13. • Jesus asks his followers to have a strong focus on social action, Matthew 25: 31-40. The above is not meant to suggest that good works alone are enough. It is faith that saves, not works. However, as set out in James 2: 14-16, faith without works is dead. Without works, many outside the Church may see the Church as dead.

To try and heal the Church. Let married priests be part of the Church. End celibacy. Allow women to have more of a role. Our youth are saddened and disgusted by the sex abuse cases. It is turning them away from the Church but not away from God. We need people to trust the Church again.

I think God is asking us to stick more to his true and real teachings. There are so many wrong ideologies and paths around these days and it seems that the Catholic Church and schools in Australia are attracting people changing the essence of Jesus' love. Mercy and understanding towards other faiths and new tendencies do not have to be changing the way Catholicism is. So we need to keep our focus in being faithful to Jesus' words. Yoga, bunny Easter, Halloween, Santa and elves can NOT be part of our children teachings in Catholic schools.

<p>God is asking us to continue spreading his word, but with a lively spirit. In Australia we have had enough of passive preaching, God is asking us to be more active and really think about the others next to us, because we are seeing a society that is dying submerged in the depression, where everybody assumes that it is normal to live like that, that is meant to be, but we are forgetting that he has given us a spirit of freedom, able to yell from inside. In my reflection, he is asking us to go and find the new disciples that are going to keep spreading the message of love. At the same time is asking us to defend our faith, that we can't avoid the opportunities to do it and then hide under the tag that we need to be tolerant, because that is a dangerous position. Finally, the faith needs to be pure, and not infected by other beliefs, Jesus teachings are one and definitive, and that needs to be our focus when we teach.</p>
<p>Open minds to married priests. Expectations for married priest and the family, children etc. if we go down that track. Who would pay for their education studies etc. how good the children are expected to be being the son or daughter of a priest. Maybe talk to ex-priests who are now married and ask their thoughts on married priests and how it may work in their eyes. Ask the question, Would they have stayed a priest if they were married?</p>
<p>God is asking us not to lose faith in the Church.</p>
<p>God is asking us to listen honestly to the voice of the laity. This should be a Church of the people, for the people. A need to meet the Church where it is at—on the street, in schools, family (not from a pulpit).</p>
<p>To have a Church that reflects all of our contemporary society (Communities)</p>
<p>Who are we to answer this question? Is it that God is asking us, or are we being asked to decide what we believe are the values we should be espousing and adhering to?</p>
<p>changes to the Church to change the Churches rules and maybe people will return to the Church</p>
<p>* That the children in our Catholic schools be taught the fundamentals and doctrines of our faith and frequently participate in liturgies and other ceremonies as well as being involved in our Church community. * That clergy or theologians, explain the Church's stand, also our ethical and moral viewpoints on topical issues that appear in the media.</p>
<p>After much thought and prayer I think God is asking His Church not only in Australia but in general to regain a sense of community. When Jesus walked among us He was really among His people. He was a part of the community not apart from it like much of the clergy today. This was how the early Church grew and spread throughout the world. It was through the building of communities not just operating Mass centres which the Catholic Church in Australia has become. Parishes were once real communities and the clergy were an integral part of that community. Nowadays the clergy just appear to celebrate the Eucharist and shake hands with a few after Mass and then disappear until the next weekend rolls around. The laity also need to be a part of the conversation as to what happens in their local parishes. All too often parishioners are not included in the conversation or even advised about decisions which affect their parishes yet they are the ones who provide for the buildings and the maintenance of the parishes. The laity also now provide for much of the pastoral care and yet are expected not to question decisions made by the clergy. There needs to be more dialogue between the clergy and the rest of the community. Decisions are</p>

made behind closed doors and parishioners are kept in the dark about what direction their parishes are being made to take. No wonder there is a sense of disenfranchisement among many Catholics who have been loyal to the Church for decades.

Prayerfully drawn by the Holy Spirit I believe the Church in Australia is being called upon to pray daily the Rosary in each family home for the poor women and their partners who abort their unborn babies under the various current state abortion laws, and to pray for those who feel compelled to avail themselves of these laws as their only solution for the dilemma they seemingly find themselves in when in reality God is calling them into family life. To this end I believe the Holy Spirit is asking Australian families to place all unborn babies under the protection and patronage of the Holy Family, and I have penned the following prayer to be said in conjunction with the daily Rosary. "Come Holy Spirit, come Mystical Heart, come upon the poor women of Australia and their partners who have aborted their unborn babies under various current state abortion laws, hasten their babies through the death they suffer and have mercy and compassion on their distraught parents; and come upon those seeking to do so and encourage them to adopt other available alternatives, change their minds and bring their babies to full term, through birth into family life as is the wish of our Heavenly Father—by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Your well beloved spouse and Saint Joseph."

To heal those individuals and families who have been broken by the Church's paedophiles and abusers and the Church's great Cover-Up. To invite communal prayer at every Mass for healing for the victims of the abuse. To replace the Church's arrogant leadership with humble servants of God and the people. To become more relevant in our modern society by embracing all who wish to participate fully in the sacraments. To engage more with social justice programs and less with elite private education and private health. To embrace third rite of reconciliation as usual practise. To diffuse fundamentalist Catholic doctrine and practice in preference for more liberal, more diverse and less judgemental ways to "be Catholic". To ordain women as priests giving them equal opportunity and status to men. To allow priests to marry. To remove out-dated readings being used in our liturgy; they are, too often, irrelevant in our progressive society.

To come back to the Church; more priests; encouragement and forgiveness of past failings; to give a greater understanding to others, as to what the Catholic Church is up to SELL OURSELVES AND THE GOOD WORK WE ARE DOING; allow WOMEN to become priests; accept back great priests we have lost through celibacy; accept homosexuals into the Church; become ecumenical with other Christian Churches

To integrate our mission in the life of Australia e.g. actively be a part of community groups such as the [-] Community Alliance where with others we work for the common good. This lets people get to know us as "human", it is an ecumenical opportunity, an evangelism opportunity and it is being "light", "Salt" and "Leaven".

I believe that God is asking us to become a more prayerful Church, to become people who freely choose to spend time with Him, listening to Him, loving Him, thanking Him, praising Him and petitioning to Him. Those of us who have been formed in how to pray have the responsibility to teach others around us how to pray. Once we teach someone how to pray, they also need to be adequately accompanied in their life of prayer. We need to become committed Christians who

personally walk alongside those members of our Church who need to be helped in their spiritual processes. Christian families need to become places of prayer where those who visit them learn to pray. Parents who have received faith need to become responsible for the formation of their children in faith. Catholic schools need to put faith formation as their first priority rather than academic achievement or sporting success. Leaders in the Church especially bishops, priests and consecrated members need to be courageous in sharing their faith without compromising on any of the more controversial topics as models for the rest of the members of the Church, especially those members who are disheartened or afraid to proclaim Christ's teachings. RCIA programs need to be solid in forming candidates in the Catholic faith instead of superficial and wishy-washy. Sacramental programs need to be better structured, for example, in the [-] Archdiocese the children make their first holy communion before their first confession and many children end up never making their first confession as a consequence (this policy is based on the false assumption that children don't sin until they are 10 years old). There are so many public figures for the Catholic Church who speak against Christ and the values of his kingdom without there being any confrontation at a public level by the Church. During the same-sex marriage debate Fr [-] supported same-sex marriage along with other Jesuit priests and the superior of the Jesuits in [-] at the time, deforming so many Catholics in what is Christian and making it even more difficult for faithful Catholics to speak the truth and be respected and taken seriously. God wants the Church to be united in the truth and love of his Son who spoke clearly on moral issues instead of skirting around them or trying to be diplomatic. Many parish priests seem more concerned about their popularity and how much money their parishioners put on the plate on Sunday instead of the eternal lives of their flock. Mass is often celebrated as an entertainment show with the priest as the local comedian instead of a reverent prayer of thanksgiving. Most parishes don't even offer their parishioners the opportunity to do a retreat as a community of faith nor do they see their leader, the priest, as a prayerful person. God wants the leaders to be witnesses of prayer, of people who have a living relationship with Him, people who take time frequently to be with Him.

1. A) Confront our past. B) Own our sins. C) Plan and move forward. 2. Our clergy should have a choice to marry or be celibate. To have a full understanding of what challenges the modern world they need to be part of that world, experiencing the many challenges family life has to offer. 3. There needs to be a decrease in the Church hierarchy, and an increase in the empowerment of the laity. There needs to be a lot more consultation with the laity, and they should be participating much more in the liturgy and the Church in general. After all we are all the Church, not just the clergy. 4. There must be a much greater role for women in the Church. We note the percentage of women in the laity of the Church far outweighs the men. If this is not addressed, there will not be a Church as most of the parishioners are over 50 years of age. 5. There must be an increased focus and involvement of the youth. They are tomorrow's Church. Sadly there is no professional stream for the youth, unless they join the priesthood/convent. As there are few vocations coming forward we need to look at ways we can utilise the spirituality and many talents our youth has to offer. They do have a lot to offer the modern Church. 6. Finally, we must insure we have an inclusive Church. It is not us mere mortals who should be judging, that is God's role. Divorced people should be able to receive the sacraments, and remarry, I feel sure God would not expect them to remain in a volatile, abusive relationship, just like I do not think he would refuse them the opportunity to then live in a loving, peaceful marriage. While we may not understand

homosexuality, many of these people are very spiritual, loving people, who have not chosen to be gay, but who are also God's people and thus we all have a responsibility to accept them as we do for all people from all countries, colour, race or creed. Jesus himself said. "Love one another as I have loved you". He did not say "with the exception of women, homosexuals, disabled refugees etc. We are all equal and should all be treated as such, with respect, dignity, and understanding.

The needs of our Church today are so many that it is impossible to put on paper, our Church is suffering and bleeding with so many outrages and sadness. But God is good and merciful and to know this merciful God, we as a Church need to be humble and try to follow the path of Jesus and make our Church a place where the Good News is really preached and taught. We are so worried about uniting all denominations, accepting these and the others in our Church, ecumenism, more positions for lay people in the Church, etc. etc. All this is very important but to achieve all this we NEED to go back to basics and follow Jesus. Jesus prayed to the Father constantly and especially when He was making important decisions. I believe that God is asking us to love Him with all our heart, mind and soul and have a personal relationship with Him through prayer. We need to ask the Holy Spirit what HE wishes from us in Australia now. The Church needs Bible studies in every parish to make the Word of God known and explained so we can live it and not only read it. We need our Churches to promote and incite Catholics of the importance of the Adoration of the Holy sacrament, because a Church that doesn't pray and adore the Holy sacrament does not know God well and will not prosper. Our life depends completely on the Bread of Life, how can we know what is best for us if we don't spend time with the One that made us and knows us better than ourselves? It is important that we replace our spiritual laziness and change the outlook that going to Church every Sunday is all we need. Being a Catholic is a lot more than that and only the Holy Spirit can reveal to us the way to reach eternal life. Our Church comes from 12 men that were faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ, constant prayer, breaking of the bread and love for one another. Catholic Church please help us to go back to basics of our faith and not compromise the teachings of Jesus. Help us to have more devotion to the Eucharist and always ask for the help our Blessed Mother to accompany us on our journey of disciples of Jesus Christ.

Transition from clerical to greater lay control of Church governance in temporal matters at all levels (parish to Vatican).

[-] CATHOLIC COMMUNITY, SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: PLENITUDE QUESTION: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Group discussion and reflections:
04/10/2018 Participants: Males: 3 Female: 8 Total: 11 RESPONSES: • Transparency in the use of financial resources. • To show the merciful face of God to all people. • To emphasize God's love instead of his punishment acting as cruel judge. • Priests should be allowed to get married. • The Church's hierarchy and parish priests should be example of humility as Jesus. • To pray all the time. • To practice authentic forgiveness for the hurt we have caused others and the one who have done to us. • To stop all kind of abuse done to the most vulnerable, mainly children. • To provide the necessary resources to the multicultural communities given that these are the present and future of Australia's Church. Including them in each diocese's budget. • Catholic religion should be taught from faith perspective rather as academic subject in schools and universities. Religious teachers must practice and be active members of their parishes. • To welcome immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. To show them compassion and solidarity. To avoid

discrimination and treat them with respect and understanding their stories of oppression and persecution in their countries of origin. • To close the asylum seekers detention centres. As Church to continue advocate for releasing them from these centres where they are suffering more repression and incarceration, mainly children whose psychological and social development are affected very badly. • To dedicate time for pray and our spiritual growth. • Being grateful to God all the time for the good and bad experiences we have. To see the bad experiences as opportunities to learn and change. • To be a prophetic Church mainly in time of serious crisis. • To live the essence of being a God's child rather living on appearance in others words to be authentic God's child. • To celebrate diversity as God's gift. • To protect and continue advocating for God's creation. • Healthy leadership based in service rather to personality cult. • To advocate when government's policies, regulations and laws affect the wellbeing of the people in Australia and others countries. Presented: February 27, 2019.

God would demand absolute truth and honesty regarding the wrong doings of clergy within the Catholic Church. Also he would want to really ensure that all victims of sexual abuse be encouraged to tell their horrendous stories, to be respected, believed and helped in any way possible to repair the damage they have endured.

That all Catholics need to become involved in the many ministries of their parish, finding one that suits them best. This will be the first step in lessening the gap between the clerical hierarchy and the laity. Parishioners must use their Time, Talent and Treasure for the good of the parish and realize we have work to do and are not just seat warmers.

Strip down from the top rungs of the Church—priests, bishops, cardinals—"bring back humble service—servants of God, instead of current hierarchal order where WE, the mere sinful mortals, genuflect to the ordained. Let priests marry and above all, allow women to be priests. Move away from old out of touch traditions and break down the old model of worship—Mass. Make God real to the young. Look at successful faiths like Hillsong.

We believe that God is asking the Church in Australia to consider how its structures and processes may be less hierarchical and authoritarian and more democratic and inclusive, especially of women, homosexuals and other marginalised people.

I feel that God is calling us in Australia to:

- become an example for the world,
- come together as a community strong and united in faith and love,
- turn away from faithless materialism and toward God and each other,
- to truly show through our actions the importance of supporting the weakest,
- to consecrate ourselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
- to stand for peace amidst a world filled with violence and hate,
- to stand for love amidst a world where families and communities are divided.

• Evangelization: promote the good news in a manner that people feel that Jesus is alive and active. • Promote a youth ministry by developing different activities that appeal to young people

(youth choir, theatre and travelling to Church gatherings around the world—World Youth Day).

- Care and concern for the people in need: nursing homes, homeless, people who live alone, etc.
- Promote a welcome ministry for immigrant people, helping them with language classes, driving lessons, etc.
- Promote a monthly adoration for praying for the priests, youth, youth vocations, etc.
- Promote spiritual activities that help priests and the religious people to grow in spiritual life such as retreats, conferences in a way that will improve the knowledge of themselves and the knowledge of Holy Scripture, etc.
- Create a ministry to discuss and answer controversial topics such as homosexuality, abortion, suicide.
- Integrate a ministry that helps, counsels and advocates for people who are contemplating suicide.
- Create Bible studies and conferences to awaken lay people to discover their call to holiness.
- Provide better religious education in Catholic schools, hire staff who are Catholic themselves.

To listen, to heed the voice of those Jesus called the "poor" and to respond with compassion. "Do to others as you would have them do to you". This quote is a powerful reminder of how we should treat all those that we come into contact with. Our Faith, our Church, does not belong to the clergy; The Laity must become involved, take action, and assume some control, ownership and responsibility for where God is leading us.

Why are you allowing my Church to be taken over by Satan? Are you fully aware of the attempts by "progressive" forces hostile to Christianity to divide and conquer the determination of followers to keep the faith for future generations and how far do you believe hostile forces are prepared to go to fulfil their ultimate desire either to annihilate Christianity as a danger to their goal of a secular society through: The implementation of laws on abortion, gender fluidity and euthanasia which not only would prevent Church doctrine from teaching that such activity is evil but also mandate that medical and ancillary personnel to perform such atrocities; The implementation of laws on same-sex marriage, homosexuality and gender fluidity while at the same time, mandating that attempts to either teach that such activities are evil or to offer counselling to those citizens affected are subject to prosecution. This action would have serious implications regarding the Catholic teaching on such issues; Participation by members of the clergy, some of whom are in responsible positions, in promoting issues which are against Catholic teaching; (See attachment 3). Implementation of laws which would remove state funding for religious schools unless they follow the "progressive" guidelines on secular education; Do you believe that the standing of the Christian Church in the community is as high as it once was? If not, why not?—The apparent inactivity of the Church hierarchy in managing complaints of abuse within institutions under its control; Attention drawn to a facet of the problem that has long been understood (at least by some analysts), but routinely rejected in that Clericalism is said to be the main sin that has given rise to the sex-abuse crisis in the Church today. The official statements blaming clericalism rather than the "dirty little secret" of a gay network have often been met with cynicism by the laity; (See attachment 2). Successful attempts by the mainstream media to date to paint the Church as belonging to the "dark ages", is run by a group of old men with old fashioned ideas which have no place in a progressive society and by resurrecting stories of ancient misdeeds; Successful attempts by the "progressive" elements within society to take control of the Church, educational institutions and the curriculum and refuse, by force if necessary, to allow any teachings of Jesus Christ to be referenced. (See attachments 1 and 2).

I think he is asking us to operate the Church to the times we live in. Priest should be allowed to marry. We have some married priests why do we have this for all. We need to welcome all people no matter what part of the community they come from. Who is on this council? If it is all retired priests and bishops we should forget it. Who's going to speak for the people we have chased away?

To help those in need, to pray, to protect children, to expose evildoers and bring them to justice, to turn the other cheek, to advocate for the powerless, to not be greedy.

I am a devout Catholic and father of seven kids with a devout Catholic mother raised by Catholic parents. I give feedback from my heart as experienced through my upbringing in almost 50 years God has raised me through the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church in Australia (and Pacific—our world) needs to be very strong to mitigate some of the crucial challenges facing the Church today. Some of which include: the decrease in membership numbers in some parishes, diminishing trainee priests and religious in the seminaries, sexual allegations against the clergy (the recent jailing of Cardinal George Pell is a case in point), the negative impact of modern technology, the rise in social injustice and deterioration of family values. God has given so much blessing to the Church which can be unleashed to mitigate the issues raised. First is prayer to God, which is the spiritual answer. Second is a committed focus on the family, which is the fundamental building block of society. Thirdly, a complete overhaul in the Catholic education system is warranted. Family and Education in this context are inter-related. God will raise his children and religious clergy through the Catholic family raised in a Catholic Education system. There is no point in saying we have Catholic education in Australia (and the Pacific) when Catholic syllabus and Church principles are not taught in Catholic schools today. One might say, there are not many Catholic teachers. Well, that's the failing part! The Australian (and Pacific) Church leadership hierarchy could be failing to harvest the rich pool of Catholic talent. How come we never got Catholic teachers into those schools in the first place? Have we not looked around? Surely, there are millions of Catholic teachers or potential Catholic teachers around. We have not simply explored the goodness God has built through the Church to prepare for the future. What else is the obstacle? Any requirements in the legal and government systems today that may hinder Catholic Education implementation compared to the early days? If not, some Church bums have to roll for failing to implement Catholic syllabus in its schools and other institutions. You can hold as many youth meetings or Church gatherings, or deliver the most focused Sunday homily and wish for God to do miracles to raise the youth and religious clergy; but that is bound to fail as we are experiencing now if practical measures are not implemented. However, if the Catholic education system and family unit is not nourished and strengthened today, we have to push for the doctrine of Celibacy to be reformed to accommodate married priests to serve along with celibate priests. That reform needs the support of the Church hierarchy worldwide, but that may have to be done in light of the diminishing young people into the seminaries. Having married priests will also address the sexual crimes reported to have been committed by the clergy which is used as weapon to attack the Church.

As a Church—to focus more on our "core mission" of making disciples of Christ, e.g. 1. Be intentional about our Catholic schools and try to develop some 'faith schools' where all the staff are active Christians. And keep enrolment at these 'faith schools' at a high percentage of

Christians (doesn't have to be limited to Catholics, esp. in rural areas). Opening new Church-run schools in areas of high population growth, simply on the basis of numbers, is just doing work that the government could do. And does not seem to be helping to build the local Church. 2. Involve lay people more in high level decision-making bodies, e.g. Episcopal Councils, Councils of priests, Colleges of Consultors, ACBC plenary meetings. Just the presence of lay people, especially women, will change the talk at the table. I know this from personal experience... 3. In this same vein, consider adopting the Anglican model of synod—authority for decision-making belonging to the whole Church. This is not to diminish the authority of the priests, but the Church is poorer if we do not bring the fullness of all the Spirit's gifts to our mission. 4. Consider the option of ordaining 'viri probati', especially for the pastoral care of rural parishes. 5. Adopt a common policy for dioceses and Religious orders for the recruitment and formation/acclimatisation of priests from overseas. Raise the bar! E.g., if a nurse needs IELTS level 7 to work in Australia, why is IELTS level 5 an acceptable level for priests? It's not fair to the overseas priests, or their parishioners. 6. Find ways to become more flexible and outward-looking in our parish ministry. So often most of our energy and resources goes into maintaining beautiful buildings, rather than creating real communities of missionary disciples. 7. Provide greater support to parish priests to lift the administrative burden (esp. with WHS, safeguarding, building and property etc.), but also require greater accountability of them—it's not ok to be a tired and grumpy old man and deliver ill-prepared homilies just because it's difficult for the bishop to move you on. 8. Encourage honest conversations within the presbyterate about how they can become a more supportive brotherhood to each other. We have wonderful priests but they struggle to have the loving, difficult conversations with each other—how's your prayer life, do you have strong healthy friendships etc.? They could learn from some of their overseas brothers here! Promote this sort of honesty and accountability in the seminary training. 9. Put more energy into supporting young couples and young families. We spend a lot of money on youth ministry but a greater focus on families with lower-primary age children could bear great fruit. They are often seeking community, and a framework for raising their children in a rapidly-changing world. Offer them faith in Jesus as a true foundation for a meaningful life! Thank you for this opportunity to respond.

God is asking us as individuals and as a community to trust in the Spirit for guidance, to hold onto our faith despite the problems that have rocked the Church over the last decade and to spread our love among the more disadvantaged in our community and beyond. He expects us to embrace all people of all races and beliefs, and as a nation to reach out with justice to the world.

For too long the Catholic hierarchy has ruled in the Old Testament tradition of fire and brimstone. Clearly it's not working. Mass attendance is down, people are questioning the relevance of our values and institution, and I would go so far as to suggest that this attitude went a long way to justifying the cover up of sexual abuse perpetrated within the Catholic Church. People just aren't buying into anymore. I think God is asking us to move toward the New Testament to Jesus' teachings of love and compassion. We need to be supporting families, nurturing our youth in mind and spirit. We need to be beacons of hope in the night. Please see additional material at the end of the submission.

I feel He is looking at how we live our Catholic lives. As a whole there is more tolerance in the country of our differences but not for LGBTI members of our families. As a mother of a gay child it

has been a long road to acceptance. She, like my other children was made in "the image and likeness of God". People say "I can accept the members of the gay community" but not the Church. These people have been lost to being productive members of the Church. Most of my daughter's friends are highly educated, very community minded in many ways, certainly aware of disadvantaged members of society with most working in this area. I feel we have lost these potential very productive members of the Church because of the way they are treated. Our other commandment is to love "one another as I have loved you". I know this is not practised by many members of our faith especially the older generation. I read the Courage pamphlet which accepts them providing they are not in a relationship with someone of their own sex. This denies many the opportunity to express their own feelings. My hope is that there is some acceptance of them for the adolescents of today.

Be open to the needs of the time and respond with all respect to the authority, community and those people involved in your mission. Church should not be compromising with the demands of the world but proper decisions hold be made on time. Listening to the Holy Spirit is very important before jumping into any conclusions. The Church should journey with the poor vulnerable section of the community. Stop making decisions which will have negative pastoral impacts. Every word should be inclusive and kind to feed the need of the poor.

The Church must be more inclusive and more open-particularly in relation to women and laity in the Church. Suggestions: women must be involved in decision making; allow (trained) lay women and men to be liturgical leaders (rather than bring overseas priests who may have limited English, inadequate training and no understanding of our local Church practices); review what priesthood means and the male centred seminary training of future priests; immediately introduce inclusive language into the liturgy; encourage married deacons; allow priests to marry (our priest, ex-Anglican, has 7 children); allow married priests to work in their professions or jobs to support their families if necessary; the priest should be a team member in the local Church structure—not the one who has absolute power; remove barriers for divorced people to receive communion and remarry in the Church.

As Australians I think God would be asking us to have more Compassion and Mercy on the refugees who have left their countries in mostly difficult situations, looking for a better life. Many people are doing what they can to help these refugees, and our Church could be more out spoken about these issues. God could be asking us to be a more open Church, that is, inviting people from other Faiths, who are Christians to receive Holy Communion, especially at Weddings, Funerals, and other special Masses. Also divorced and remarried Catholics could be welcomed into our Churches, and also offered Holy Communion. Many lay Women and Men who have a degree in Theology could assist the priests from other countries who are not easy to understand, by delivering the Homily at Mass. Also, inclusive language should be a must in all of our Readings and Prayers.

God is not asking us anything new because his Word has not changed. The reality is that we have largely stopped listening to him to our peril. We simply need to worship him and follow his divine laws as they have always been taught.

My concerns are built around the following issues: 1. The priestly ministry. 2. Power structures within the Church, 3. The language used in the Mass.

1. About ten years ago I was visiting a priest friend in a [-] diocese which has fewer than twenty-five active priests and he pointed out to me that were he to be suddenly taken ill it would have been very difficult to replace him yet there were "four or five men and women in the parish who would be quite capable of celebrating Mass". 'Communion liturgies' or 'liturgies of the Word' are fine but what people want is the Mass complete with consecration and it is anachronistic to believe that this can only happen if a celibate male can be found to celebrate it. You then also have the hypocritical situation wherein there are married men exercising priestly ministry across different dioceses in Australia. Presumably, these have come from non-Catholic denominations. It begs the question as to whether a young Catholic candidate for the priesthood—male or female—should be advised, firstly, to defect to a Protestant denomination, then become ordained within that denomination and, after getting married, defect back to the Catholic Church.

2. We need to hand over all temporal authority in the Church to the laity and free priests and religious to exercise pastoral and sacramental ministries. This will also free them from the scandal created by any financial impropriety or other abuses of power.

3. In 2010 the Church introduced significant changes to the language used in the Mass. In an effort to "reflect the original Latin translation" (apparently not Jesus' language) some unfortunate problems were created: (a) There was the dualism implied in the response "And with your Spirit" and, at the Communion, "say the word and my soul shall be healed". Wasn't 'dualism' once a heresy? (b) The re-introduction of "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;" returns us to the old obsession with guilt rather reconciliation. (c) At the Creed "I believe" replaced "We believed" thus returning to the idea that belief is a contract 'between God and me' and not a communal concept. (d) The use of "men" was retained despite the significant progress that has been made in the area of inclusive language: i.e. "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven," (e) The Creed also contained the rather archaic word: "consubstantial". What was wrong with "One in being"? (f) In the Gloria, there was a return to the triumphalist language:- "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father." So much for God becoming man and living among us. The liturgical changes outlined were foisted on the faithful without any consultation and with minimal explanation. A good example of power gone mad.

To be more inclusive as a Church community in order to create a place in which people can be themselves whilst also serving God and having him as an active part of their lives.

Participation of Catholic women in Church life to be consistent with studies of the life and leadership of women in early Christianity. For example the study of women's leadership as produce by Christine Schenectady CSJ (in) *Crispina and her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity* (Fortress Press) Minneapolis 2017.

1. The Church is to communicate to its community a more welcoming and accepting environment of different people e.g. divorcees, gay and transgender people. 2. Compassionate recognition of and full compensation for child abuse victims by the clergy including personal approaches and

apologies from the clergy themselves. 3. No protection of offending priests under any circumstances by the Church hierarchy and bringing full legal justice to the situation. 4. A necessary direction for the Church to remain relevant is to begin a process to allow priests to marry. 5. Another necessary direction for the Church is to introduce women as full participants in the priesthood and their roles are not only limited to supporting roles in parish life. 6. For the Church to reach out and be relevant to young people via schools and social media as many of our youth do not attend Mass therefore feedback for this Plenary Council could be restricted to mainly older and more traditional Church attendees.

God is asking us in parishes to re-engage with families, children and youth, in schools and communities, who are the future of the Church. We need to provide reliable, prayerful, song filled Sunday Eucharists where the message, the music and the fellowship truly reflect the joy of the gospels. (Pope St. Pius X, *Motu Proprio Tra Le Sollecitudini*, 1903, Pope Francis' address on Sacred Music 4 March 2017, Pope Francis' Homily, Casa Santa Marta, 12 December 2013. *Musicam Sacram* no. 5). We need to develop a love of the Mass amongst all Catholics through consistent encounter with the "Summit and Source" in schools, places of tertiary education, seminaries, religious societies and parishes. Accordingly, we need to make provision for Masses which have been fully resourced in terms of preparation, equipment and staffing. Schools should take responsibility for teaching the music of the Church and training the Church musicians of the future (*Musicam Sacram* no. 18). At present, schools treat music as an add-on, but the Church sees it as fundamental. All Catholic schools should have staff tasked, resourced and paid for teaching and leading the singing of the faith with their colleagues and their students. (*Musicam Sacram* 18- 21). The Church has acknowledged for centuries that sung prayer is one of the most powerful methods of evangelisation yet the Australian Church has vacated the field while the numbers of music teaching sisters and brothers has decreased. These nuns and brothers gave their lives to the nurturing of the song of the Church and their legacy has been frittered away by neglect with the result that our young people are drawn to worship in other Churches of other denominations which take their worship seriously. Many Catholic schools boast luxurious sporting fields but claim they can't afford a chapel or an organ. Otherwise, they make the chapel a multi-purpose space, because space for God is less important than everything else. Some schools and parishes build luxurious Church buildings which are completely useless for congregational participation through thoughtless designs and dead acoustics, leaving us with pretty but useless buildings for worship. Empty Churches achieve nothing. Full Churches gather people together to go out into the world and transform it through community building and acts of social justice. By rebuilding our liturgies and our faith communities as places of love and mission, through powerful sung worship, we can realise the mission of Christ in this country and save it from becoming the barren loveless land that it might. Catholic schools presently teach 20% of the children of this country, yet we are singularly unsuccessful in sending them out into the world as strong Christians, filled with zeal to bring the love of God to others. If we truly lived out our mission as Church, Australian Catholics could change this country and the world considerably for the better.

God is asking us to look beyond the confines of suburb or area-based parishes. Parish life as we know it, sadly, is coming to an end. But this is also a wonderful opportunity to invest in a much larger and broader concept of parish that really encompasses community life. When I think of my

ideal parish in a physical sense, it is one in which the Church gathering space is central but surrounded by the life of the parish—schools, aged care, child minding, respite centres and so on. My sense of parish does not have a parish priest as administrator, but an employed CEO or an elected board or council. I want my priests to concentrate on their priestly work—the sacramental life of the community—without the worry of balancing the books. God is asking us to be prophets—to stand up against criticism and be truth-tellers like the prophets of old. God is asking us to be discerning and to challenge the status quo. God revealed God's self to us through Jesus and we learnt about compassion and equality, equity and solidarity. We learnt about these things; we just don't do them very well. Our Church is on the firing line. Most sexual abuse occurs in the family, yet the phrase sexual abuse is now synonymous with Catholic Church. I want victims of abuse to have justice and some sense of dignity restored, but we now seem to be in an age where picking off the top-ranking Catholics in Australia has become sport. I am not sure that the media arm of the Catholic Church in Australia is doing such a good job. God is asking us NOT to give up on Catholic schools. I don't care how many Catholic Education Offices there are across Australia—I am not sure they are being authentically Catholic. I want Catholic Education authorities to value the religious life of the Catholic school, not as a photo op or a twenty second sound bite, but as places that privilege the transmission of Catholic culture, where both tradition and contemporary life are valued. God is asking us to embrace everyone sincerely. It doesn't matter what rhetoric is used, some groups and individuals feel tolerated by their Church. The Church isn't reflecting the God of love that I know. I will always be Catholic, but sometimes my Church makes this so difficult. God is asking me to hold on and work for something better.

To be welcoming and inclusive to everyone. All different groups in the community.

God is asking of us, as he always has, to be honest and to love one another. Love our neighbours and our enemies. To ensure the safety and well-being of the vulnerable, including: children, women, those seeking asylum, gay and lesbian people. God is asking us to be inclusive and share our wealth with those less fortunate.

I have no idea what God may be asking of us at this time! (Take note, I am writing this just after Cardinal Pell's conviction has been made public and I think that has somewhat changed what I might have written before that event). However, what I would hope God might be wanting us to do is return to the basic imperative Jesus gave us—"To love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and with all your strength ... and love your neighbour as yourself." For me, that is 'rock bottom', 'ground zero'. We need a new way of 'doing Church' that is attractive and fulfilling for all ages, all stages of life and all lifestyles. We need to start again, start a new thing in the Church; not 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater', but giving that 'baby' a place where it is nurtured, loved and valued. Let's move on! We can't change history, history has happened. We can learn from the good and the bad of history. AND WE CAN CHANGE CULTURE! We all have a role to play in the renewing and transformation of God's Church in Australia. As Sally Hood remarked recently, "We need missionaries, mystics and prophets."

Archdiocese of [-] Council for [-]. The members of the Council for [-], as part of the Catholic Archdiocese of [-], urge the 2020 Plenary Council to place high priority of the importance of educating all Catholics about the essential nature of ecumenism and inter-religious relations through prayer, communication and education. The 2020 Plenary Council is encouraged to

develop specific strategies which promote relations between the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches and between the Catholic Church and other religious traditions to advance mutual understanding, respect, enrichment and cooperation for the greater good of all. As a Council we encourage the 2020 Plenary Council to place priority on the multiple ways that bishops and parish clergy initiate opportunities for and co-operate with other Christian traditions in ecumenical prayer. It is essential that all Catholic parishes are guided and supported with resources to promote joint witness to the Christian faith by co-operation with other Churches in the areas of education and social issues. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference are requested to work with appropriate bodies to prepare guidelines and policies on issues which continually develop greater understanding of the nature of ecumenism and inter-religious relations among all Catholics. Special focus needs to be placed on promoting and organizing opportunities with the Jewish community in order to foster knowledge and understanding of the unique bond between Jews and Catholics. As Pope Francis has stated “dialogue and friendship with the children of Israel are part of the life of Jesus’ disciples” (Evangelii Gaudium 247-248). There is also the additional essential need for promoting and organising opportunities with the Muslim community in order to foster knowledge and understanding between Muslims and Catholics, being aware that Muslims “profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, who will judge humanity on the last day” (Evangelii Gaudium 252). The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is urged to revisit the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in the Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio, 21 November 1964) and the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate, 28 October 1965) in order to educate all Catholics about the importance of achieving Christian Unity and harmonious relationships with people of all faiths. These teachings are further supported by the more recent documents issued by Pope John Paul II: That They May All Be One (Ut Unum Sint, 25 May 1995) and Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium, 24 November 2013).

God is asking us to Live Up to Our Faith as taught by Jesus in the New Testament—Gospels and Epistles. Not be afraid or keep silent about issues that matter and are contrary to the Catholic Faith. For example, Abortion, Euthanasia, Same Sex Marriage, Abuse, Religious Education, Politically Correctness, Ethics and Morality, and more.

I feel that the strong message the Church is receiving is that there is great disillusionment in the current leadership and that much more needs to be done to address the very weighty concerns that many Catholics are feeling. Systematic changes are necessary and Australia as a young nation could be leading the charge to create the change that I feel is required to regain the trust lost through the reported abuses which have been perpetrated over so many years and which have been covered up in many instances.

To boldly proclaim the consistent and universal truth of His truth revealed through the Church He established. Truth cannot change. The revealed truth given over the ages by the Holy Spirit via His saints, and from the lips of His Holy Mother to the Catholic Church is so needed by the world, but cannot be legitimately altered by man, nor even by committee. To do so invokes the wrath and justice of God. The flood, Sodom and Gomorrah are not mere illustrative stories. Maintain the faith or risk your soul, and the souls of all deceived by erroneous opinion. Cleanse the bride of Christ.

<p>I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to teach faith in our Catholic schools. Catholic schools have become places of prestige and 'old boys' clubs—and faith is practiced by the minority, with some students even being ridiculed or bullied for attending Mass. The faith of our young people must be nurtured and young people need to be encouraged in their faith.</p>
<p>We felt after reflection and prayer the topic of a married priesthood could be visited and discussed as an option to revitalise Australia's dwindling stocks of priests. Some points for discussion are as follows: *Married priests—relevance in today's society. *Look to the eastern rite for a working system of married priests in the Church. *The Church throughout history has had married priests and when married Anglican priest converts to Catholicism he and his family are both welcomed with open arms—why can't we have married priests again? * Celebrate priests—to orders i.e. Jesuits, Dominicans or Franciscan.</p>
<p>To ensure that we practice core principles from the Gospel—work with the poor and vulnerable.</p>
<p>Children and youth in Catholic schools and parishes. *Church not as relevant or important now in schools. *Teachers not practicing Catholics—only teach curriculum not faith based learning???</p> <p>*Church supporting parents to teach the faith to their children. *Most people come to Church purely out of habit—we've just always done it that way. *Schools are religion friendly not faith friendly. *Teachings on charismatic renewal open eyes to Religion (teaching rules) v Faith (giving tools).</p>
<p>"To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God". We have done wrong and have damaged the universal Church through our sins and arrogance. We need to acknowledge our crimes and wrong doings and start anew with a contrite heart and a humble spirit. We need to call on God's grace and be open to His Spirit speaking to our hearts in prayer, dialogue, penance and service. Then, we need to act on what we have listened, spoken and agreed on with resolution, promptness, and compassion.</p>
<p>Have more faith which I think is missing in most of us, some attending Mass because it is expected of us. And so more to attract younger people.</p>
<p>The full and absolute inclusion of women in the Church in ordained ministry. A Church where personal conscience is treasured and not subject to some old man's (priest) misguided perceptions about reality. A Church that understands that there are more learned laity than religious. The ordained do not hold all the knowledge. A Church that respects the Australian culture and does not subject it to priests from other countries whose cultural heritage seems pre Vatican II! A Church that has a constant appraisal process for its priests. There are no avenues for priests to get feedback about what they do. And let's face it some of them should not speak publicly—their interpretation of the word is kindergarten level. A Church with inclusive language.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To have a Church without celibacy, as that is not natural.- To monitor priests all the time for people to start trusting them again.- The Church to pay the salary of priest not the followers and use the money of people for sustainable support to the poor.

- Demand modesty in women of all ages in religious celebrations and for men and young people good personal presentation.
- To find more options of Mass than English.
- Evangelization should be free (retreats).
- Good teaching of Christian values and the Church in schools, universities and Catholic institutions.
- Reinforce Catholic learning for students in public schools outside of their schools.
- Support migrant families spiritually and as community.
- Provide spiritual teachings in Catholic and public schools.
- The Church should be more active and promote activities that have existed in its tradition.
- To love one another, forgive, being merciful and being beings full of faith and hope.
- Get the people closer together with more social, sport, artistic events.
- Be generous and make other people happy so these people will make more people happy and the ripple effect will continue.
- For those married for a second time have the divine blessing and being able to get married in the Church. God always gives another opportunity.
- Inclusiveness of young people and creation of programs for youth workshops, reading groups and leaders formation.
- Activities that encourage the young people to get involved in the Catholic Church.
- Humility and reverence to the most Holy sacrament.
- Renew the evangelising mission.
- To have our own temple for the Spanish speaking community in [-].
- Proclaim the word of God without fear everywhere.
- Praying and opening to the evangelisation.
- Widening of the possibilities for confession.
- Being a more active Catholic.
- Being more inclusive.
- Highlight the role of the layman and promote it.
- Transmit the faith to our friends and relatives.
- Work for the children and the youth.
- Participation of women in the priesthood.
- Have more respect for the sacred: holy communion, holy sacrament, silence during Mass.

<p>God is asking us to ask the right questions. He is asking us to be truthful in our submissions. We want the clergy to be the equal of woman. Womanhood is the vocation of love.</p>
<p>Reform. What hasn't worked in the past needs to be changed. Recognising system errors and fixing them to prevent future error.</p>
<p>Embrace his commandments and be more handfull giving, to become a path to extend his word among others. To extend his message to those who still do see his grace and how merciful he is for us. To collaborate more with our parish and those in need, especially those with low resources and health needs.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to love one another, and to show respect and love to everyone. I believe God doesn't care whether we are Catholic or Jewish, Muslim or Atheist. God knows what is in all our hearts and sees all our actions. I believe that God understands our changing society and all that is a part of it. God wants us to be happy and love one another, that this is above all else. Marriage laws, science, religion, politics, country of origin, race, age, sex, everything. None of that matters if we treat all humans with respect and love every person like our neighbour, brother or sister.</p>
<p>I believe God wants a Church which treats and respects all its members equally. Priests should, of course, be either female or male and be free to choose a life partner should they so desire. All committees and enquiries should be equally representative of God's people in terms of lay and clergy.</p>
<p>God is asking us to protect the future generations from demoralization. Church was always bastion of tradition especially the traditional moral values. Despite recent revelations about some individuals in Church behaving badly, the Church teachings were always important in our lives guiding us to control our urges and desires especially those of sexual nature. Children, whose experiences shaping their minds and brains, are especially vulnerable to the influences from media (including social media) which are full of sexually explicit material. Young people can easily be misguided by media content that "teaches" them and encourages them to explore their sexuality from very young age. The recent introduction of gay marriage act in Australia only adds to the problem as it suggests to youngsters that there is no difference whether you marry and have sex with male or female. These days it is evident that some very vocal groups are running international campaign promoting immoral behaviour in media and are lobbying governments to change the law to enforce what they call "LGBT equality" in society and schools. These groups have infiltrated the media organizations and have powerful influence on many politicians as the only thing that politicians are afraid of is media and its impact on public opinion. I believe God wants Church to remain bastion of the traditional values and teach those values to children and young people. Church should guide them in their early lives so that they develop good moral thinking pattern and will not venture into the danger zones in their young lives from where it is very difficult to come back.</p>
<p>Pope Francis recently told Italian newspaper La Republica that his namesake had "longed for a poor Church that looked after others, accepted monetary help and used it to help others with no thought of itself". "Eight hundred years have passed and times have changed, but the ideal of a missionary and poor Church is still more than valid," he said. He wants to see an overhaul of the</p>

Church, bringing it closer to ordinary people. Hence let us see in Australia a more relevant Church that connects with the ordinary person. Therefore why do former Archbishop's own property worth \$2.25 million (February 2018, Fairfax media and the Age on Catholic Church's purchasing property for Archbishop Hart). Why do Archbishops live in houses resembling mansions? Why do priests get a new car every two years? Why do priests call on the ordinary person to raise money so that houses can be built for priests which are far better than their own or which they can only dream of living in? All of this is not relevance, being one with the ordinary person, the poor, the homeless and the sick. Sell Church property and give it to the poor; stop giving priests new cars every two years and building new presbyteries. Pope Francis has put aside the papal limousine and is driven around Rome in a simple blue Ford Focus. He has given up the spacious papal apartments in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace for a modest residence in a guest house. Pope Francis has gifted a new medical clinic as a Christmas gift for the homeless and pilgrims. He has welcomed the poor, homeless and unemployed as guests of honour for a Mass and gourmet meal in the Vatican on Sunday, saying that helping the needy was one way of obtaining a "passport to paradise". He has dined with the poor and spent about two hours chatting with them as if in a family, listening to their stories that often told of suffering but also of hope. He has done all these things not to glorify himself but to do as Christ did. I therefore challenge priests, bishops and Archbishops to do the same—to give up their trappings and power and wealth and to see Christ in the poor. All of this will allow the Church to become relevant once again. In addition to the above treat the Laity with respect. When you make decisions as an Archbishop or a priest tell us why this decision has been made. For example why don't we no longer say the Nicene Creed—what was the reason behind this, what were the theological supports for this decision? Why have we changed the order of the sacraments? Now making Confirmation come before First Holy Communion—once again in our parish no reasons or explanation was given. Yes we will have our Archbishop on video telling us why we need to raise money for the Church, but for such crucial decisions no video.

To be united. To Care for all. To educate the young. To listen to the people. To make our Church modern and inclusive.

To allow the Holy Spirit back into our Masses. I was raised a Catholic and encountered Christ through the charismatic renewal of the 70s, searched for a Church to go to that was alive which led me to the Pentecostal Church. Was a member for 23 years and developed such a love of God and an intimate relationship with Him that I truly felt alive, peaceful and filled with purpose. My children (5) loved going to church and the teenagers felt they belonged and it was cool to go to church. I have always loved the Catholic Church and the simple reverence it held, but wished with all my heart that the power of God would move in the Catholic Church like it did every Sunday and weekday ministry within most of the Pentecostal Churches. God told me to go back to the Catholic Church and finally I obeyed. My husband has always remained a Catholic and our children were raised with both. God has given me a heart to share with Catholic women what I had learnt through Women's Ministry in the Pentecostal Church which was to develop a relationship with the Holy Trinity and thereby my everyday life became alive, reading scripture took on new life and being a Christian was a way of life not just an act of worship on Sunday. My relationship with God was two-way—listening and sharing. It has been difficult returning to the Catholic Mass as many

of the Masses are very dry, some of the priests are not filled with the Holy Spirit and the children struggle to know why we go. It has been a road of discovery for us how to connect with God without having it coming from the pulpit and to rely on our own prayer times for our spiritual nourishment. Since coming back (last 6 years) I have discovered several priests that have beautiful relationships with God and inspire their congregations, they are just few and far between. I have become a member of Awaken Prayer Ministry which is an amazing place where the flow of the Holy Spirit is incredibly powerful but the power is also through the Masses, rosary and Christian meditation—it truly is a place that inspires and encourages pew Catholics to become alive and awakened in their spiritual walk.

To listen to the views of all Catholics first and foremost and not be distracted completely by vocal external media voices. We need to look at what engages people in the Catholic faith over their lifetime. There are many of us who have had a lifetime of wonderful experiences growing as Catholics. The misgivings of others are abhorrent to me and are not reflective of the broader Catholic community. I agree that our Church must address the crimes of past and present and that the Australian legal system must play its role in bringing about justice. God is calling those of us with age and experience to awake from our slumber and lead. This includes clergy and lay people. God is calling us to be educators and to let the people of Australia "seek and find" meaning in their lives. God is calling Catholics to stand up for true Christian values and to be open to those who stubbornly and willingly criticise Catholics at any opportunity. I deal with a range of colleagues at work and in the community who delight in running down just the Catholic Church and I have found more and more strength recently to challenge their views until they can provide me with a better and clearer answer to the deep and everlasting questions regarding humanity. God is calling us to find our own individual place amongst our own Church community and to play our part to work with others in shaping the future of the Catholic Church locally and in Australia.

"WHAT IS GOD ASKING OF THE CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA AT THIS TIME?" I would like to turn this question around and ask: "What is the Church in Australia asking of God at this time?" My entreaty to God is the same as King David in Psalm 74 "O God, why have you rejected us so long? Why is your anger so intense against the sheep of your own pasture? Remember that we are the people you chose long ago, the tribe you redeemed as your own special possession! And remember Jerusalem, your home here on earth. Walk through the awful ruins of the city; see how the enemy has destroyed your sanctuary".... (v1-3) "We no longer see your miraculous signs. All the prophets are gone, and no one can tell us when it will end".... (v9) "Remember your covenant promises, for the land is full of darkness and violence!"... (v20). "Arise, O God, and defend the cause" (v22) It seems to me that we have forgotten who God is: "You, O God, are my king from ages past, bringing salvation to the earth. You split the sea by your strength and smashed the heads of the sea monsters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan and let the desert animals eat him. You caused the springs and streams to gush forth; and you dried up rivers that never run dry. Both day and night belong to you; you made the starlight and the sun. You set the boundaries of the earth, and you made both summer and winter". (v12-17) A God who is all loving and all powerful! Maybe if we as a Church returned to our first love of God, and remember that we are not in a human battle to save a dying institution, but we are in a spiritual battle as the bride of Christ to save the world! Maybe if we put on our spiritual armour (Ephesians 6:10-18) being

“strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (v10) and maybe if we “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (v18), God will have a basis to move. And as a Church we must pray (beg, plead, entreaty, demand) that God moves! Because if we have lost the favour of God (because of our sins as an institution), we are a dead man walking.....

As the 2nd generation of uneducated/unchurched/unevangelised Catholic who attended "Catholic" schooling, AND after having 3 children attend "Catholic" schooling, I believe the Catholic Church is being called to either take responsibility for Catholic Education and teaching the "3 legged stool of the Catholic Church i.e. Scriptures, Magisterium, and Tradition" and it's social teaching etc. to children and parents alike—or inform the Catholic schools that they are only to call themselves 'private' schools. This is because the Catholic schooling is teaching modern ideology and using Catholic teaching such as reading the Bible, as punishment—hence the teachers are not knowledgeable or interested in teaching the children truth of the Church, nor accurate history about the Church. However, I must admit that this is somewhat reflected in parish organised teaching sessions, as their resources are inaccurate and hence, it becomes difficult to access truthful, accurate parish/school based resources and parish retreats and such are treated with utmost caution.

Just to do the will of God in our daily lives. To practise practical Christianity as practised by Jesus in His day. Essentially working for social justice in all our day-to-day dealings with people. We Catholics must stop withdrawing from the real world of work and creating and enjoying our day-to-day family life. Somehow since Jesus Christ's time we now have a position where a relative few virgins are making laws and interpreting the word of God for the majority of people following the natural law of being fathers and mothers. This is not unnatural to do so. Both men and women naturally reach puberty and most respond by establishing normal relationships. Sadly a number of us are confused by the seeming positive emphasis placed on virginity. This seems to have attracted people with abnormal attitudes towards the normalcy of a heterosexual life. Jesus taught the disciples to pray in the form of the Lord's Prayer. The prayer is significant in that He told us to ask for our daily bread. Today to me this means employment. We would do well to read Pope Leo XIII's letter to his bishops in 1891 in which he spoke about the results of the industrial revolution causing the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. Nothing really has changed. We have just as big a problem globally today. The main issue is greed and lack of ownership by the people of productive assets. The Pope in that time was reacting to socialistic proposals of the state taking over property, resulting in communism. However he recognised the issue of the poor getting poorer and the rich getting richer. He felt the Church had an obligation to show leadership through the bishops. This is still the Church's obligation today. His *Rerum Novarum* letter therefore is very relevant to now as more and more people are thrown onto the compassion of the St Vincent de Paul's Society. Such is the need for families to get work these days that going to Mass is of secondary importance. May I remind the bishops of Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs? His theory means that we human beings only start thinking about spiritual things when we have first satisfied our physiological needs (food, water, shelter, sleep etc.) and safety needs (secure place to stay). When we train our priests in the seminary they have already taken care of their physiological and safety needs and now looking for social needs (a feeling of belonging), esteem needs and the ultimate need of self-actualization. Sadly few in the priesthood will ever

find self-actualization unless they take on more responsibility. We the Church need to do more to remind people that God lives in each of us. We have only to pray to do His will rather than our own. Such a faithful approach will result in embracing all the goodness of science in all walks of life. All that science does is discover the nature of God. Not to prove God doesn't exist. In summary Catholics must follow Jesus. God's with us all just as He was with Christ.

There are about 65 million people around the world seeking some harbour from wars etc. Surely we the Church in Australia can mount a better effort than we have done so to date. I know we are doing a lot of talking and brow-beating of our politicians and also providing local parish practical help where funds and goodwill allow. Here is a suggestion that I believe is entirely possible given the bishops of Australia are faithful to Pope Francis. Australia with the bishops' guidance and in conjunction with Pope Francis could consider progressively establishing safe places for up to 1 million displaced people in transition. I imagine such a place could be under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. The Australian government would treat the facility just like foreign diplomatic people. They would make the land available without charge. The facility would be built probably by private enterprise and operated as a large rental only complex. This facility would be a transitional facility say maximum of five years during which those renting (or being subsidised by contributions from the UN) can live in basic comfort, while arranging for more permanent settlement to other parts of the world, including Australia. The facility would be secured so no escapes are possible. There would be an opportunity to be gainfully employed within the complex, children appropriately schooled etc. This sounds like an impossible idea but it requires Christ's faith that moves mountains and a lot of negotiation including assistance from Pope Francis's, all things are possible approach and connections with the UN. Such a concept once proven viable in Australia can be replicated in other parts of the world. If we can find 65 nations that will do the same? I know that the business world would jump at such an opportunity to be involved. I don't envision this facility to another Manus Island of course. Given the good will of the Australian people this project is entirely doable. The UN's subsidies ideally should come from those nations causing the wandering people now in all sorts of shanty towns. Those people accepting offers of temporary protection should also be expected to make a contribution where they can. This seems to be a win/win situation: profits for the facility investors; temporary settlement of people with their families in God but basic accommodation; minimal contribution by Australian government; Unable to show a more positive solution to the wandering peoples of the world. This facility will be needed for a long time. It should be seen as a long-term investment by all.

To be faithful to the message of Jesus Christ. Jesus was a very practical human being. Although He knew the people of His time needed a new way of living a life of faith in God, until His few years of public ministry before His crucifixion, He remained inconspicuous as to His beliefs. One such belief was that He came to preach the Gospel of fullness of life for those prepared to do the will of His Father in Heaven. To this end He started to heal the sick. It appears to be a major part of His ministry and one carried on by His subsequent followers. He spoke about having a faith that could move mountains. He also reminded the woman at the well, noted by Him that she had had a number of men in her life, that the time had arrived that God is to be worshipped in spirit. Today

sickness is an abundant experience globally, including Australia. The cost to our budget is mind stressing. I think it's time that we collectively and individually looked at how faith plays a very importance role in the healing process. Medical research has shown that approximately 30% of improved wellness comes about from faith in potions. It's called by the medical profession the placebo effect. In fact when testing the effectiveness of new drugs, a drug must exceed this natural effect in order to be considered worthwhile proceeding with. Any day we will find someone on the TV stating their case for healing properties for some potion or diet etc. Our medical put much of this down to placebo effect only. In other words faith. Jesus had difficulty in healing and usually put it down to lack of faith. He also marvelled at the faith of some who didn't even follow Him. My point for the Australian Church: many hospitals are sponsored by Catholic institutions. Surely we Catholic could persuade the investigation of the reason for the placebo effect. No profit making groups would sponsor this type of research as there is no money in it. We have numbers of charismatic groups trying to deal with faith healing but fails in relation to early Christian times. Maybe faith is the key. If so the Church should be pleased to sponsor the research. I personally believe it has to do with having an intimate constant relationship with God, incarnate within each of us. God is so close to each of us from our birth but we must do His will and not our own. That's what Jesus Christ preached. Today everything else but God's will is more important. It stems from an individual lack of faith perpetuated in our corrupted democratic processes. No longer can it be said, "See how those Christians love one another". We the Church need to start that change parish by parish. Our priests need to show some leadership in this regard.

We Catholics, both individually and collectively need to bring our God incarnate to all aspects of our earthly life. Jesus was asked how we should pray and among other concepts He asked each of us to pray give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses. I suggest that Jesus planned that His Holy Church on earth would take responsibility for delivering such pray requests rather than stay within the realm of the heavenly future. God has no hands but ours. The Church collectively and individually must bear responsibility for correcting the situation exposed by Pope Leo XIII in his *Rerum Novarum* two centuries ago. Then he observed the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer. It is still the same to this day. It is recognised that poverty comes about because productive assets are owned by too few of the so-called workers. The socialists recognised this and to the horror of the Pope, wanted to outlaw private ownership by the State confiscating private assets. He recognised that such a philosophy would ultimately backfire on the very people proposed to be helped. Catholic action resulted from such an encyclical and the then union movement was infiltrated by Catholics of action. Then Catholics were not withdrawing from the secular world; like Christ they were preaching the modern gospel of social justice for all. But ultimately our Christian faith, the very reason for social justice, gradually disappeared from the core values of the union movement so that today that group is full of thugs. In 1954, however, a Catholic priest in Spain, basing his business ideas on *Rerum Novarum* devised a new business to be owned by the workers. From five workers the business was built into a current business of 80,000 owner-workers. Today such a business is described as a Workers Cooperative. I believe such a proven business structure, backed by the wealth and foresight of the collective Church could go some way to answering the needs of those praying for

their daily bread. This I think would be responding to Christ's plan for His Church in Australia. I'm a member of the Social Justice community in [-]; we are trying to get this concept underway as best we can. On a completely different matter I feel the Australian Church must address the continuing issue of re-married divorcees not being able to participate fully in the sacraments of the Church by taking communion. Very few of us Catholics get married with the intention of a marriage failure. Yes some blame can be sheeted home to both partners. I think of Jesus and the prostitute and His unwillingness to punish her. I believe as it stands now in our Church a murderer can be forgiven and receive the sacraments again. I believe the greater crime is obvious. We laity are governed by a mostly virgin hierarchy and I don't believe it is particularly concerning to them. We must have an intimate relationship with God to love and trust Him. So too is it so in marriage.

INPUTS: GROUP SUBMISSIONS • Need to inspire children to become more spiritual and find ways to encourage parents and children to be involved and become a part of the congregation. And we need more priests and more Laity/Lay Interaction to achieve these aims. • We believe that the Church needs to use opportunities such as when the schools celebrate Grandparents day to include children, parents, and grandparents to be involved in a liturgy which illustrates the dignity of each person, their need for respect and how well each of us contributes to the building the faith of our community. Use of a Children's Mass would also be a useful adjunct to such a celebration. • Teaching of faith in schools needs to be relevant and lived. • The Me Generation—respect has dropped for each other—innate dignity of each person e.g. The Euthanasia issue. • Younger age groups need to be given the opportunity to socialize, build community as we used to have. • God is asking us to be his voice by Evangelisation programs e.g. NET and Good Shepherd Program—By increasing Community Awareness and to be relevant in Today's Australia through our love for God. • Further the cause of Caroline Chisholm. She is an excellent model for the Laity and set a great example that we can follow. • Love your God, Love your Neighbour, Love Yourself and Act accordingly. • Youth—Life skills—Run a Course on Sewing and Carpentry. Sunday school. Easter Play—Christmas. Do we listen to youth? Or do we talk to them. Antioch / Search. Review school Systems—of Faith Teaching • We have to look at everything in the eyes of faith, like for example the verdict for Cardinal Pell. It should be an occasion for us to be frustrated but to have hope for the better. • To be relevant. And is the Clergy the acknowledged leadership of the Church. Australian society is questioning everything. • Be respectful. Love your neighbour as yourself. Be Honest. Be thankful for the many gifts of God. Australian Society is questioning everything. • To engage with people and encouraging children to participate in Church activities. Read the gospel of God through Peace and Unity. Be thankful always. • Encourage strong leadership through Unity in Faith of men and women. • Encourage the laity to accept leadership roles and decision making in the Church. • Include us the laity to participate more within the parish to assist the priest in everyday running of the parish. GROUP SUBMISSIONS Continued. • To be more united in loving care for each other. • To be thankful for living in this beautiful land. • To have him more in our lives. Individual inputs: To pray for our country and all the people, thinking also of all those who are suffering and traumatised by natural disasters. To pray for our country in times of hardship and disasters. Why is the younger generation not attracted to the Church? Review and Renew our faith! I am sure that God is asking us to love one another, respect one another and to love and respect our mo...

From the [-] Group, [-]. 1) To change the gender domination in the Church at all levels, parish, diocese, Rome. For a start, women ordained deacons and women on all decision-making bodies. (Much of the cover-up about sexual abuse would have been avoided.) 2) To review and simplify liturgies to recognise that ALL are called to priesthood through baptism. Optional celibacy and married priests. 3) To promote prayer and Franciscan spirituality (e.g. Fr Thomas Keating and Fr Richard Rohr) and other ways to update all. 4) To dispense with the trappings of clericalism and have accountability and co-responsibility between clergy and people. 5) To change seminary training to include social sciences (especially personal and sexual development), contemporary theology and scripture understanding. To improve the screening of candidates so that service to the community (not power over the community) is an essential requirement. 6) To promote the positive God of love and Gospel-based teaching and less control by fear.

I believe that the relationship between the clergy and the laity is an important issue that needs to be discussed at the Plenary Council. One of the issues that emanated from Vatican II was the need for the laity to be more involved in the Church. From what I have seen since Vatican II this issue has either been totally ignored or implemented in a way that simply pays 'lip service' to the role of the laity. Without a truly collaborative relationship between clergy and laity the Catholic Church is going to continue to stagnate and lose parishioners at a far greater rate than is happening now. There are many lay people in parishes who have more skills and experience in organisational and financial management than the majority (I suspect) of priests currently administering or managing parishes in their roles as parish priests. Priests are important as spiritual directors in parishes, but there are many lay people on Parish Councils and Parish Finance Committees who seem to be there to fill the numbers so it can be said that the parish has such committees. No heed seems to be given to the views, skills, knowledge or experience of the individual or collective lay members of the committees (in areas other than spiritual or liturgical matters)—the clergy seems to be able to overturn the views of their committee members on any topic without any explanation, even if there is a consensus. Alternatively, often only 'favoured parishioners' or male majority seem to constitute committee membership. The clergy needs to lose their dictatorial stance and learn how to manage in a more collegiate manner, recognising and using the expert knowledge they have in their parishes, both among mature parishioners as well as youth, for it is these young people whom we depend on to continue to grow the faith in the parish. Committees balanced between mature as well as young men and women can provide a broad cross-spectrum of strengths across parishes and help to identify relevant issues for discussion. If there is a truly open, transparent and collaborative relationship between clergy and laity I am sure that we would see more effective working relationships, a healthier and more transparent Catholic community, an improved volunteer service and more meaningful discussions and outcomes regarding issues that are currently of concern to the parish and the Catholic community generally e.g. pastoral care, Catholic education, women in leadership and ministry, immigration and refugees, shortage of priests, etc. Lose the clergy defensiveness and secrecy and need for control in all aspects of Church matters! Let us all, including priests, do what we do best to contribute to a living thriving Church.

I think God is asking us to keep the Catholic Church relevant in our modern society. To do so means less exclusion and judgement and more love.

I believe God is calling the Church to respond as Jesus would to the challenges of our times; words/actions that align with gospel values; practise inclusiveness/tolerance/equity for all; discard 'immediately' the patriarchal authoritarian hierarchy of the Vatican model; include women in all preaching and authority roles; be laity driven and actioned so as to be relevant in the world for all humankind; withdraw sexist language in all liturgical processes, prayers and traditions.

To reflect deeply on what it means to follow Christ in today's society. To sincerely embrace people of all persuasions, so that they feel the welcome—to not just pay "welcome" lip-service. To readily be open to change for the good within each parish—for this to happen though priests have to be prepared to 'let go of the power' that they still cling to. They have to meet the people where the people are not telling them to climb up to talk to them. As this is written in the first week of March, we have had a huge blow from the guilty verdict. This is a call to find the strength to continue on our daily task of reaching out.

To be more prayerful and understanding of our community and the love of our neighbour. Our Indigenous population should be given greater encouragement by both the Church and our parishioners as well as refugees to our wonderful country.

I think that the Catholic Church should offer an alternative service to the Mass on Sundays. I love the Mass, but some people don't relate to what they see as a repetitive liturgy, which they can find boring. They either stop going to Mass or go to a Church where the service is not repetitive. This is not instead of the Mass, but as well as. The service could still use the Church's readings and maybe sing more songs. It could have a homily/teaching. It could offer prayer ministry. Jesus prayed for many people in the Bible. It could include testimony of answered prayers. It could have more intentional Fellowship at the end over tea/coffee where people feel they are welcomed and people care about them. Some people now come to Mass and no one talks to them before or after. Mass can be a lonely place even when they are surrounded by people. There needs to be connection or else people will feel alone. If they feel alone, they might think "what is the point of coming back". Loneliness is becoming a bigger problem and can lead to health issues. The Church should be a place of belonging and caring and praying for people's emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Otherwise we are like the scripture that talks about knowing people's needs and sending them on their way and not doing anything to help. Each person is important and we are called to love our neighbour as ourselves. This applies in spades to people who come to Church in need and we let them go home again in their need. That is not living the Gospel. But with our Mass being so structured, it is not easy to connect with those who come. How often do we hear people say "I have been coming here to Mass for ages and no one has ever spoken to me"? The answer is "too often". Let us have a service with a different format, and much more intentional connection with people, showing greater inclusivity. The model of priest up the front, congregation having a repetitive liturgy, and going home may have been a suitable model in the past, when we had smaller, more close knit communities. But in our isolated world today, we need a model that reaches out to EVERYONE who comes. We need to seek out the lost and the lonely. We need to reach out to the "ONE" sheep like Jesus did. We need to leave our 99 good friends and reach out to the "ONE" and help them to feel God's love and that they are valued and have a place to belong. No one should feel lonely in a church. So we could stop people leaving the Church because we only offer one type of service, and we could actually increase our numbers as

we reach out to the lost and lonely. We can become FAMILY to many who experience a lack of family in their lives. But these people may find our Mass difficult to relate to initially, so the alternate liturgy described above could be a better way of introducing new people to our Church. They could gradually obtain an understanding of the Mass. At the moment, it is the Mass or nothing!! We need another Service—PLEASE!!

To change the words of the Our Father prayer to more correct theology. It is wrong theology to ask the Father to not lead us into temptation. I am no theologian, but I can see that this is wrong. The Father CAN NOT AND DOES NOT lead us into temptation, because that is against Who He is AND what HIS VERY NATURE is. So why does our Church insist we have to say in every Mass we go to 'Father lead us not into temptation'. How ridiculous is that. Why do we have to persist with saying something wrong when the Church in other parts of the world has corrected this bad translation? Why did our bishops in Australia not follow the lead of the other countries immediately when they changed this? Have our bishops fallen asleep at the wheel!! I just can't believe that our supposed learned men don't find this offensive, because I find this highly offensive to God. It might seem like only a few words, but it is of huge importance. When you add this problem to so many other problems of the Church of what they have done wrong, not only sexual abuse, and other things that they are not doing right (which I have written submissions about) I sometimes wonder why I still go to Mass. I could feel quite at home in a number of other Churches. I no longer feel the loyalty to the Church like I once did. I will consider my future options of where I will worship in future based on whether I see substantial changes in the Church or not. "Tradition" is no longer a good enough reason for me to stay in the Church. The Church has done such irreparable damage over the years and they should be accountable to the people they serve. I am not only talking about sexual abuse, but their domineering attitude and thinking they are more important than the people they serve. Because to be a Shepherd means to serve and get their hands dirty. I don't see that happen much. Jesus modelled this with the washing of His disciples' feet. Superiority amongst the Clergy is very off putting. I was told that this Plenary Council has the power to make changes in the Church of Australia. I shall be looking closely to see what changes they are prepared to make and how soon they will happen. My faith in God is strong, but where I go to keep holy the Sabbath and worship my God, is in His Hands—because He is present in ALL the Christian Churches. And I am not alone in these thoughts. The Church could be decimated because they have not made enough changes soon enough to still be relevant. I think only a miracle of God could see this Church vibrant in 30 years' time.

I believe God is asking the Church to be less inward facing and more outward facing. I believe that God is asking each of us to look after the 'ONE'. This refers to the story of Jesus the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 and goes in search for the ONE who is lost. Now I know that some Catholics are already involved with refugees, the poor, the homeless, the sick etc. But many people in the Church just go to Mass on Sunday for one hour and that is the extent of their involvement. Just imagine what our world could look like if every Catholic took seriously the call to reach out to others that is a repeated theme in the Bible, expressed in different ways. And this includes the Clergy as well. They too need to get their hands dirty and get smelly from the sheep like Pope Francis says. If one person or one family cared for one lonely or broken person, think of

the impact we could make for good. I have personal experience of this as a result of providing friendship, and by praying with this person and being a spiritual companion for them when they had no one in their life that they could call a friend. They were rejected by family and different Churches, despite having been a Christian for more than 50 years. This person was born a male which caused great anxiety and dysphoria and felt they had no option but to have the sex change operation. This has not been a total solution to her problems but has also created problems regarding acceptance by other people. I have journeyed with her for about 10 years now. I was reluctant at first, but felt God nudging me to offer friendship. Little by little I have seen changes happening in her. Not so much in outward appearances, but in her heart. There have also been changes in me as a result of this journey. I am now very thankful to have this person in my life. She has become a friend to me. She has given me the opportunity to live out the gospel message of someone who asks Jesus "when did we see You hungry, lonely or in need" Jesus' reply is "When you did this to the least of my brethren, you did it to Me". I started out scared as I had never met a person like this before and now count it as one of my joys in my spiritual walk. I pray that others could also experience the joy that comes from being able to help someone in need. Scripture says that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Our society places too much importance on receiving and not enough on giving to those less fortunate than ourselves. I think this message is even more important than going to Mass, good and all that it is. We can go to Mass and so easily forget about those in need. We can chuck a dollar or two in the poor box and think we have done our bit, but that is a far cry from what Jesus is asking of us. It is like turning a blind eye to many who live on the fringes of our society.

I believe God is asking that the Laity be EMPOWERED. There are many ways that this could happen. I would like to suggest one way. IF, I stress again, IF our Church is to continue, people's faith needs to be enlivened. The best way is help people experience the FULLNESS of the sacraments. Because most of us are Baptised as babies, we grow up with limited understanding of our baptism. People should be encouraged as an adult "to make their surrender to God" which can be life changing. Not just renewing our baptismal promises at Easter. I have never seen anyone have a life changing experience of God from doing this. Yet I have seen that happen when done in a more specific and intentional way. The same is true for Confirmation. Children are too young to understand the FULLNESS of this. When they are an adult and have the FULLNESS of this explained, I have seen people come into a greater experience of God in their lives and wonderful fruit in their lives including receiving the gifts mentioned in 1 Cor 12:8-10 and 28. Most priests don't talk about this because they have not experienced this themselves, which is a great pity. If our congregations were encouraged to do this, our Church would become so alive! This was the vision of Vatican!! And more than 50 years on, our Church has not changed that much. When will the Church embrace and promote these gifts that have been HIDDEN UNDER A BUSHELL. Shame on the Church for preventing its people from seeing the gifts that God wants to give to His people. Priests have stopped this flow of grace because of their fear of the unknown. Scripture says many times "Do not be afraid". The clergy are blocking their ears to what God is saying through His word and therefore blocking the message from being received by God's people. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! When will the clergy open their ears and their hearts to the FULLNESS OF WHAT GOD WANTS FOR HIS PEOPLE TO SPREAD HIS MESSAGE FAR AND WIDE. Below I will

suggest a way of doing this. But Pope Francis is not afraid to speak this message. He has said that these gifts are a Grace for the Church at this time. Our last 3 Popes have welcomed the Fullness of these Gifts. But why won't our Clergy follow suit? My conclusion is they are afraid of the unknown. Well, we don't have time to waste on that FEAR anymore. God desires this for His whole Church. We are losing people to Pentecostal Churches because they want to experience this and don't know it is available in our Church. In [-] we have Hillsong Churches springing up everywhere, some needing Police on duty to direct traffic—such is the number of people flocking there. We can sit back and watch that trend, or we can STAND UP and proclaim the FULLNESS of what God wants for the Catholic Church, otherwise the Church will die out before too long, based on current trends. Which bishops want that to happen on their watch!! Will they be open to hearing what God is saying about how to reach people TODAY and not live in the PAST!!

Given the current climate following the royal commission and abuse crises, we must stand together and not retreat from our faith. We must acknowledge the failures of people within the Church and seek to provide support and guidance to those affected. We must ensure such abuse is not repeated, however we also must not let this affect our commitment to living and sharing the word of God. The Church must continue to vigorously defend its teachings on protecting life at all stages, and upholding the sanctity of traditional marriage. Most importantly, despite these controversial and political areas of today's society, we must remember that we are part of the one true Church, and not be discouraged by opposition.

I believe the Catholic Church in Australia today seems to lack reverence and respect for our Lord. Most of the people in the Church today don't even seem to fully understand the sacrament of the Holy Mass as they should, for it is vital that the people know what the Mass is. I believe that over the years the Church has begun to slowly lose its strength, faith and integrity. The Church in Australia has become rather watered down and has lost its tradition in many parishes. The role of the priests also appears to be rather misunderstood. People often do not recognise the sacrifice they have made by giving up their lives to God. The priests should also have authority over his parish, they are the shepherds of the people and they are there to guide them toward eternal life. They are also there to help the people grow in faith and virtue. Parishioners can sometimes overstep their boundaries and cause disunity. Without the priest in charge, I feel as if these sorts of issues would begin to increase. The idea of women priests also does not reflect on the true teachings of the Catholic Church. Christ did not choose women as his first apostles and this was not due to him being unaware of this concept, for the idea of priestesses was rather common in those days. A priest is a representative of God the Father, therefore it is impossible for a woman to be a priest, for how could it be that a woman represents a father if she is a female? I would like to see the Church stand up against the immoral, secular ways of Australia. I would also like to see the restoration of tradition and respect for our Lord in the Catholic Church of Australia.

I think that the main thing God would like the Catholic Church in Australia to do is to spread the Gospel. I think that the Gospel is the Good News message is that God sent His son Jesus to the world to save us from our sins. I do not think that most Catholics are really aware of this. I think that if you asked them, they would have no clue what the good news is. It is a great message, a message where God reaches out to His creation and brings them back to Him. I think that most Catholics who grow up in the Church are given a great many messages, but the basic one, the

really good one, is maybe forgotten or just assumed people are aware. If an organisation exists to promote a message to the world then it should be obvious to everyone that this is the message that they promote. I do not believe this is so in the Catholic Church in Australia. If the people who belong to the Church do not know this message then we have failed as a Church. The main message of Jesus should be known by everyone. I realize that the priests are aware and that the Mass is all about the gospel message with threads of it throughout the Mass but it is not obvious to most lay Catholics. I think there are many things that people think the Church stands for but the main message that Jesus came to save us from our sins is not readily apparent to most people. The main thing should be the main thing—what we stand for, our basic message should be well known by everyone.

Future of the Catholic Church must involve Church Renewal: gender equality e.g. Equal role for Catholic Women in decision-making; Review of Governance and Church Human Resources and Church focused on Salvation.

As 'baby boomer' and a 'cradle Catholic' who considers his Catholic education one of the more profound influences which have shaped his development as a person, I'm happy to offer some reflections on how the Church might reflect on where it finds itself at the start of the 2020s. In my lifetime Catholicism has moved from being a subculture of Australian society which experienced quite a deal of prejudice and injustice. It gradually emerged into modern Australia society as an equal partner with other Churches. As a provider of education, hospitals and social welfare the Church has become a significant contributor to our culture. As Australian society has become ever more materialistic many consider the Church and its message irrelevant. Many prefer to access Catholic education, health services and social welfare but reject Catholicism as a faith community. Sexual abuse by Church officials, an extraordinary tragedy for both victims and the institution, has been used by the media to constantly target the Church and create the perception that our society is better as a post Christian atheistic culture. It seems to me that during much of my life the Church in Australia has spent its energies in growing and developing the infrastructure that is the Church. It has done a marvellous job of maintaining the plant. Given that our Church now finds itself in a culture that either rejects or isn't interested in spirituality and faith I suggest our strategy needs to change. No longer ought our efforts to be directed towards maintenance but outreach or mission. We ought to be looking to reach out to those outside the faith community, including retired or alienated Catholics inviting them to discover afresh who Jesus Christ is and the relevance of his message for us in this current world. The Church in today's world is increasingly struggling for relevancy due to its clericalism. This is evident in attitudes in which clergy almost totally dominate opinion, don't take seriously the wisdom, experience and insights of laypeople. Women must be given responsibility and leadership in our Church and clergy must learn to humbly listen to and be guided by those at the grass roots i.e. finance councils, liturgy committees and parish pastoral councils. The relevance of a mandatory celibacy does little to attract the best of our youth to liturgical leadership. I remain committed to the Church but believe there is much that has to change. The Plenary Council will be a test of just how much bishops really are open to ideas and genuinely listening to the *sensus fidelium*. My fear is that the Plenary Council will be nothing more than a talk-fest when once again so many of us reflect back on a wasted opportunity.

God is ever present within each of us and all we need to do is learn to respond to the power of God's love, connect with support, care and love with one another and reach out to support others. We need to witness to integrity, truth, justice, fairness, joy and love. We need to be inclusive of others. We need those who have abused or committed offences, especially against children, to have the humility to sit down with their victims, apologize and pay for counselling for them. We don't need to punish by imprisonment—that does not help the perpetrator or the victim. That is not Christian. If a perpetrator does not have the courage to repent and apologise, they need counselling to help them to get to this.

I believe the Church is asking the Church in Australia to have a greater focus on Communion. In his Encyclical, *Vita Consecrata*, Pope Saint John Paul II mentions the importance of supporting and being obedient to the Magisterium of the Church and mentions how the founders of Orders were especially obedient to the Pope. (*Vita Consecrata* 46 "A distinctive aspect of ecclesial communion is allegiance of mind and heart to the Magisterium of the bishops, an allegiance which must be lived honestly and clearly testified to before the People of God by all consecrated persons." "The sense of ecclesial communion, developing into a spirituality of communion, promotes a way of thinking, speaking and acting which enables the Church to grow in depth and extension." and "In founders and foundresses we see a constant and lively sense of the Church, which they manifest by their full participation in all aspects of the Church's life, and in their ready obedience to the bishops and especially to the Roman Pontiff.") I believe that this message of "sentire cum ecclesia" is absolutely essential to our communion as a Church, and that all Catholics, not just consecrated religious must be taught and formed to have this understanding and ethos. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his perfect wisdom, has given us a way to be in true communion as a Church which this is why he said to Peter, "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church". The Popes throughout the ages have had many different styles and personalities (e.g., Pope Francis or Benedict XVI etc.). Yet each is chosen by God at a specific time in history to discern the contemporary world (with the help of their brother bishops and the "Sensus Fidelium") and decide how best to develop the Kingdom of God. Does not a true respect for the Office of Pope also involve a healthy affection and spirit of communion with the Holy Father? I believe God is asking the Church in Australia to emphasize loudly and clearly the vital virtues of humility and docility in being a Catholic. We are called to be a sign of communion not of division! I believe that the faithful can be better helped to understand the importance of a healthy communion which at times involves letting go of one's own style, method or way of doing things. A current example is with the recent encyclicals of the Pope, such as *Amoris Laetitia* and *Laudato Si'*. Indeed, there should also be appropriate forums in which one can discuss one's difficulties with a teaching of the Magisterium or Pope yet this should be done in the most respectful and discreet way with the vital importance of communion in mind. I believe that there is so much unnecessary division in the Church that could be rectified greatly if this message of a humble "sentire cum ecclesia" attitude was better promulgated in our Churches in our schools and in our homes.

To reassess what is working and what isn't working for us and for other Christian Churches. To love God, self and others.

To be a sign for the new generations to show that it is possible to live the gospel with help of God, in spite of being sinners. Try to reach out the people who don't go to church.

To listen to others as we work through the concerns of the Church. To encourage the Church to re-think the practices and bring these practices up to the 21st Century and relevant, so the younger Catholics are interested and heard, which may increase interest with the Church. To open church all around not just in a building, but bring prayer music outside to others, just like Jesus did. This is not just in the cities but out in the rural townships.

He is calling us into a personal relationship with him through his Son Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit. To respond to His grace and love by becoming his missionary disciples.

1. We are living in a non-Christian, increasingly anti-Christian, society. In past generations we have been able to rely on a context of public values and institutions generally supportive of the Christian Churches and way of life and a populace who know about Jesus and the basic tenets of the gospel. There is now a mismatch between our proclamations from the pulpit and in public and the needs of our hearers. It is futile to call for greater effort to Christian behaviour where the knowledge of the transforming power of the Gospel is lacking. Beginning with our Mass congregations, we need to preach the kerygma—the core gospel—and call for daily conversion to new life through the indwelling presence, 'Christ in you, the hope of Glory' [Col 1:27 RSV]. This is a need for all of us in the Church, from bishops to the newly Baptised so we have the faith to win in a hostile environment. In accord with the urging of St Paul and Pope Francis we need to preach the Gospel in season and out of season. 2. In 2019 we stand in a time where the world no longer supports our Christian faith or institutions but in fact is hostile to them. In this hour, Our Heavenly Father is calling us to unity with our Christian brothers and sisters of different denominations. There is no longer time to wait. It is time to act now on the essential Unity that we share in Christ Jesus our one Lord. Our Unity is not one of theology or traditions. It is the Unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17, that we 'may be made perfect in One' [Jn17:23 NKJV], that is in the one Person of Jesus Christ growing to full maturity, and so, in union with the Blessed Trinity. So now, knowing who we are in Christ, it is time to rise from the table, put the towel around our waist and go to wash the feet of our brothers and sisters of different denominations in acts of prayer and service. This is not to be merely from one leader to another but rather local parish to local congregation. This is a witness to the world of today that they are not looking on religions wrapped in self-interest but upon a community of love, the outreaching Love of God that demonstrates that God has sent his Son among us. 3. To do these things with the Love of God we need to teach our people to daily activate the graces of the sacraments of our initiation: • Remembering and renewing the grace of our baptism, transforming us from terminal earthly life to the eternal life of Christ empowering us to live each day as members of God's family—each time we bless ourselves with holy water. • Activating the grace of Confirmation by frequently asking for the infilling / baptism of the Holy Spirit to experience the action of God in our lives and be effective witnesses of the gospel to others [Acts 1:8].

The previous PP asked me to consult the [-]. This was done over two meetings with prayer, the reading of documents and discussion to come to a consensus that God is asking us in Australia to:

1) As a Church, to rebuild trust by

- the eradication of the corrosive culture of clericalism—"an evil . . . in the Church" (Pope Francis in "Letter to the People of God" and attached articles by Rosica, Bp Long and Timbs.).

- The appointment of women to senior Church positions, such as chancellor and delegate of bishops.
- True accountability and transparency with full involvement of the faithful, including parish and diocesan pastoral councils, and diocesan assemblies or synods; with pastoral plans and annual diocesan reports.
- The holding of diocesan synods/assemblies with deanery and parish listening sessions as part of normal diocesan governance.
- Further remodelling of priestly formation, including ongoing development, assessment and registration.
- Reconciling publicly and fully with all the persons abused, their families and communities, and having a strong commitment to just redress on this issue.

2) To make the promotion of "Laudato Si'" a priority in all dioceses.

3) To show, by concrete example, the importance of social justice in the life of a Christian and giving priority in ALL parishes and ALL dioceses to the ACBC Social Justice statements e.g. (a) welcoming asylum seekers and refugees (b) support for the homeless and the poor, (c) recognition and support for our First Nation people.

Group response: Submit/surrender/listen to the Holy Spirit through participation in a Life in the Spirit Seminar or similar experience. Individual responses: • Holy Spirit central to Church (x2). • Learn more deeply about our faith. • Catholic Charismatic Renewal in all parishes. • Why so many lapsed Catholics? • Be still and listen to His voice (x3). • Speak LIFE! (x3)—advocacy for prolife and marriage • Help us to evangelise (x3)—share our faith. • Live our faith (x3)—start with family → community. • Priests and laity to attend Life in Spirit Seminar or similar (x2). • Repent (x4)—fasting, scandals. • Personal relationship with Jesus and others rather than religion/authority (x2). • Change people's perception of Church. • Youth/children formation—schools and Church (x2). • Ecumenism. • Invite people to PGs/Church/etc. (x2). • Lobby government. • Bring God back into society. • More male participation in Church.

Group response: For the clergy to encourage opportunities for us to develop a personal relationship with Jesus and manifesting the gifts of the Spirit. Individual responses: • Personal relationship with God (x2). • Unity between Churches. • Go forward as disciples in evangelisation and healing. • Learn from other Christian denominations. • Standing up for our faith against secularism. • Renewal of clergy. • Patience and tolerance in relationship to priests (x2). • Openness and unity with others (x2). • We need a big spiritual shake-up. • Employ parish youth workers. • Working towards a more Christian country. • More decision making by laity. • Spiritual renewal (e.g. Life in the Spirit Seminar) for all—youth, etc. (x2). • Reformation of the seminary. • Opportunities for Holy Spirit in Mass—singing before Mass, silence after Communion, prayer ministry. • Reaching out to the lost. • Charismatic prayer group in every parish. • The whole operating in the gifts of the Spirit.

To review Church tradition and ritual as Jesus pointed out this was not what God was about. God is about loving one another and accepting all just as Jesus showed us.

The Holy Spirit is asking all people to remember the radical, revolutionary teachings of Jesus Christ. For too many centuries the Church has been trying to patch the new cloth of Jesus onto the old coat of the patriarchal, oppressive, exclusionary social structure. The Church is intoxicated on the old wine, and has forgotten the new wine of Jesus' radical message of love, acceptance, compassion, equality, inclusion, and social and distributive justice. It is time to remove the constructs, rules and practices that are not based on the message of Jesus Christ. About every aspect of the Church structure and practice we must ask: 'Does this express the truth that all people are beloved children of God, made in his image, and equal in worth and dignity in God's sight?' The light of God's love is in all people regardless of race, culture, gender, sexuality, marital status, class, poverty/wealth, or religion; all are beloved. God is asking us to love, accept and welcome all people, and to actively care for all of his creation. The Church hierarchy has become an 'old boys club' with members protecting each other and their reputations at the expense of the well-being of God's people. This must stop. The Church must be open and transparent, a place of welcome, love, peace and safety for all people who wish to have a relationship with God.

Humility and humbleness of spirit. Walk the talk... Our leaders cannot stand at the pulpit calling for Catholics to donate generously when they live plush lifestyles... You only need to look at the office of the Archdiocese of [-] to see how plush it is! Grand foyers with fancy paintings and a corporate air of importance... Then asking the Catholics to contribute to the upkeep of such plushness? Just take a look at the more robust Asian Catholic Churches... Thriving in their simplicity with growth of faithful because they are not parading their wealth. The Catholic Church in Australia is being crucified literally because of perceived wealth and arrogance... So yes, humility and humbleness of spirit is required and it should show in our governance. Secondly, please review the hierarchy at the Archdiocese of [-]. I have a 30-year HR background and I can tell you for such a small scope that the Archdiocese of [-] covers, it has one too many DIRECTORS? ...And each one has a team of top personnel whom I am more than certain are not "volunteers" like what is expected of the grassroot staff at the parish office! We have to work for pittance literally (but most for absolutely nothing at all!). Those who are paid are not even getting fair wage as what is equivalent in the current job market in [-]. Probably the excuse is we are a religious body or a not-for-profit org. So why is a not-for-profit org running expensive private schools? ... Even teachers in the Catholic school systems are paid not equivalent to the teachers in the public system... How can the Catholic Church talk about fair go and equality and all that? No point standing at the pulpit and saying how the Catholic Church is the biggest employers next to the government in Australia... Is it a fair and just employer?... That is more the question! By the way, you can only consider yourself an employer when you pay a wage ...therefore, a volunteer is NOT YOUR STAFF. The Church asks so much from volunteers and give us a whole lot of rules, regulations and expectations to comply to all the time but what we get is a mere cup of tea and with any luck, a certificate at the end of the year. This while we have Directors, Asst Director 1, Asst Director 2, Head of this and that. A good example is when the parish needs to contact HR if [-] is not the office, no one else in the fleet of HR personnel that sits at the [-] Archdiocese office, seem to be able to provide solutions ...they may cover for [-] during her absence but merely to take message for her and get her to call back. So I ask, what's the point of having at

least 5 level deep HR people there? Ridiculous when grassroots at the parish level is delivering the real work (and money!) and expected to work for free?

For genuine reconnection with people, for inclusivity, for re engagement with those excluded and for a Massive change to Church governance from clericalism and elitism to lay led genuine grassroots voice being heard and leading. Women need to be equally involved and patriarchal hierarchy so focused on an elite male group who are privileged just has to stop for real people to see they are the Church.

Bringing Catholics back to Mass, especially those with young families. • How can we bring Catholics back to Mass? There are family, friends and parents of kids at our schools who no longer attend or attend once or twice a year. How do we understand why they no longer practice regularly and then look to what we can change to welcome them back or preferably stop them leaving. Focus on youth. • With the current trend in society to move away from the Church we need the youth to get to know God's love, but also be educated with the tradition and knowledge of the Church so they can have educated discussion with the wider world as they grow. • Educating and putting more focus on the Catholic faith at Catholic schools. Unfortunately for many these days this may be the only place get to learn and know about God. • Build better community, social networks and leveraging new technologies and social media. The Church needs to embrace these as it will be expected by the youth of today and tomorrow. To enable greater diversity at the highest levels of decision making. This includes lay women and men. The diversity of thought and life experiences this could bring may bring new life to the Church.

I feel that it is time for the Church to reinvigorate elements of its character that were present at the beginning (i.e. 1st Century AD)—a Church or and for the ordinary person, concerned with the wellbeing of individuals and community led.

Jesus, founder of the Church, instructed that it teach the good news to all the world and by inference to do this in the same way that He did by how He treated others, spoke to others, cared about others, looked after the needs of others and lastly and least importantly by the sermons that He gave. His parable about separating the saved from the lost is all about how we treat others. He demands of us that we must love others as He loved and loves us, He very clearly pointed out that whatever we are doing to ever the smallest of others we are doing because of the depth of Divine Love directly to Him and this includes the inflicting of physical, sexual, mental and emotional pain and failure to relieve in so far as we are capable of the pain being suffered by others (failing to stop others). Nothing of this instruction has changes. The Church is still to be for the world teacher of the Good news by example, to be salt and light on the Jesus pathway to God. Unfortunately evil sinful actions of the Church's professionals have trashed and smashed all credibility and believability out of the Church out of its professional positions (irrespective of whoever might be in those positions now) out of its orders and even out of sacraments. So badly has the Church become scandal to the world that the world is no longer recipient of teaching salt and light from the Church but is now providing the teaching salt and light trying to bring morality back into the Church. So in addition to Jesus's gospel instructions He also has to be calling the Church back into a position of morality and evidenced moral uprightness from where it can become the Good News teacher as He instructed. The absolute evil has existed for generations and without major reform the lack of credibility and consequent inability to teach in any way

could exist for generations. The only obvious way to minimise the lack of credibility time period (which is surely what Jesus wants) is to seriously reform the position standards required of the Church's professionals is in fact disband some professional groups entirely. Thus all levels of the Church must be fully transparent and fully accountable to all stakeholders (not just superiors or even peers), orders involved in the most serious physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse and the monstrous damage that caused to so many innocent, defenceless unprotected children and young teenagers must be disbanded totally and their evil sins consigned to history (this means at least six orders both male and female in Aus), the totally discredited by the evil of professionals sacrament of reconciliation right, 1) must be gone and right, 2) reconfigured as its very obvious that a confession of individual sins as demonstrated by the evil of the professionals does not a true follower of Christ make. When the Church can ignore its founders teaching on love so evilly and often there is a need for renewed formation for its professionals.

God loves us and since the beginning has called us to Him. His desire, and therefore the desire of the Church should be to make all His people saints and to be one with Him for eternity. This applies to those outside the Church as well as inside. This could be achieved by:

- Renewed focus on reverence for Jesus Christ.
- Renewed veneration for our Holy Mother Mary.
- Renewed interest and focus on the holy men and women who have gone before us.
- Fight back against the evil in the culture wherever it manifests, including some within the Church.
- Protecting the innocent and vulnerable.
- God is calling our priests, bishops and religious to stand boldly in the face of the criticism and mockery of the secular world.
- God is also calling our priests, bishops and religious to be open and transparent, especially considering the recent sexual and financial scandals.
- God is calling our priests, bishops and religious to be faithful.

1. To firstly address the issue of abuse of children and vulnerable adults by members of the Church ... and keep doing this for at least 50 years! To properly address this issue there must be no use of words such as 'scandal' and 'shame'. The focus needs to be primarily on the victims and their families with NO qualifying statements, e.g. but Church does great work in welfare etc., abuse also occurs in families. The clear objective needs to be on healing for victims and a national program (education, protocols and zero tolerance of abuse or cover-up) to ensure this never happens again.
2. A national distance education program for lay leaders in areas such as liturgical ministry, Scriptures, Church history and a basic overview of Catholicism. Many regional dioceses do not have the resources to do this but have an increasing need for trained lay people. This program can use the latest technology with online video and chat.
3. An increased level of women involved in every level of decision-making. Many women, including religious, did their best to raise the issue of sexual abuse by priests and were ignored (or worse). While this goal will not solve the problem it will certainly be one step to avoid it happening again. This will include the use of inclusive language wherever possible.
4. A national policy on the initiation of adults. The RCIA is one of the most important liturgical documents to come out of Vatican II but it is often ignored or diluted at the parish level. A model for this policy could be the excellent national document from New Zealand. This could be a simple but very significant recommendation from the Council.
5. A vision of Catholicism in Australia that is based on following the way of Jesus Christ in humility, in service, in compassion for each person and in working towards a just nation and in care for creation.
6. The vision of humility be lived out in practical ways through the avoidance of certain

titles, e.g. My Lord, great care in the purchase of liturgical dress that speaks of humility rather than opulence, power and prestige and deliberation over the purchase of property and furnishings.

To make the world a better place. Share the message of peace and love.

Allow married men and women into the priesthood. Give all parishioners a vote in choosing bishops. Treat women equally; do not repress them.

Remember to uphold the moral values of the Catholic Church. Teach, promote and follow the Ten Commandments. Retain and uphold our Christian i.e. followers of Jesus Christ's, ethos and values—get back to the basics of Jesus Christ's teaching—Congratulations to Pope Francis for his humble and inspirational example of being a follower of Christ. Teach by example. Be proactive in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Continue Chaplains in schools. Ensure prayers are taught, especially Our Father (The Lord's Prayer), Hail Mary, the Rosary, Prayer to our Guardian Angel. To speak up more about our Christianity—our Faith and Jesus Christ. To be proud of our belief in God, not be ashamed to talk about it. To stand up, speak up and be counted, all Christians standing / banding together as a united "front". Speak up e.g. at Senate Inquiries, Royal Commissions, e.g. Same-Sex Marriage Vote, e.g. Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018. Leadership, transparency, accountability, (no more secrecy), respect, healing, justice, forgiveness, humility, mercy, peace and joy. Share / spread the Word of God by example. To be seen / recognised as Catholics / Christians / followers of Jesus Christ. Get back to our Catholic Identity—no eating meat on Fridays. Processions in public of our Catholic faith and beliefs, e.g. Marian Processions, making the Sign of the Cross in public, maybe even wearing our scapulas and holy medals. To pray for those who have 'lost' their way Encourage more families—music, choirs. Modernize Church for young people; uptempo music and choirs. Be relevant / engaging especially towards and with young people. Encourage participation of children through more music and (simple) musical instruments—e.g. (rice) shakers, maracas for children, to feel like they are involved at Mass. Eventually they will know the words and understand as they grow. Bring back more of the beautiful traditional sacred music and hymns from past centuries, as well as modern folk and also "Hillsong" type music, thereby reaching out to wider age groups of people. Embrace our other Christian faiths; * invite them into our churches and to our services. Encourage more inter-faith gatherings e.g. World Day of Prayer. Acknowledge the diversity of cultures in this country and to accept multiculturalism. To be thoughtful, considerate and respectful of all people we come in contact with. Valuing each and every person in our community. To help other people in their hour of need. That we recognize the goodness and dignity in each person, who is God made in God's image and likeness, Be inclusive—of children; divorcees; lesbians, gays. To be truthful in our own thoughts of Teachings and in Beliefs. I don't accept the teachings of the Old Testament; especially as there wasn't anyone recording as the events occurred, but sometime later. Bring the lost generations back to the Church—We have lost about three generations from our Church ... (from about Vatican II ...). Education.

Please read my attached submission. A summary follows: Introduction: Locates this submission within a taxonomy of responses and suggests that a merely statistical research analysis may miss small but prophetic voices. Responding to a change of era: Briefly touches on the enormity of change happening at present, and the ability of society to address the issues that it faces.

Suggests that the Church is a gift to the world in addressing these issues but the Church is presently relatively absent from them in the west. The Gospel lived out in the Church changed society at the deepest levels of consciousness and has been the single most creative cultural, ethical, aesthetic, social, political, and spiritual force in history. Why is this not the case now? “Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven”: Attempts to answer the question posed in the previous section. Suggests that the influence of Platonic thought is dampening the Church’s imagination and agency in the world. Therefore I spend some time exploring the broader understanding of the gospel of the early Church as ‘new creation’ and the implications of this. The model and functions of new creation in the neighbourhood: Takes the implications drawn out in the previous section to propose what this might look like in an incarnational expression in a particular neighbourhood: a prototype of how it might be embodied and expressed so people can taste and see and understand at a primary level. The concepts, of course, need to be fleshed out in community. Once underway, the guiding methodologies will be one of prototyping as a learning organisation, using exploratory methods like action research. I conclude with a summary, of what I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time, namely: Level 1: For the Church institution, to rebuild trust. Level 2: For parishes, to become missional communities by facilitating encounter and the forming and nurture of missional disciples. Level 3: To be an eschatological community; an anticipatory sign of the in-breaking presence of the alternative reign of God and foretaste of the kingdom, and to participate in the renewal of all things: the restoration and redemption of creation with all that entails: table fellowship, community, culture, economics, agriculture and animal husbandry, art, architecture, worship. To be a catalyst of community and neighbourhood transformation. Empower whole communities through the utilising of strengths within that community—to help everyone make our neighbourhoods places of belonging, places of health and well-being, and places where people will want to live and work. To demonstrate an alternative economy which witnesses by living differently. To demonstrate a different social order that is a subversive resistance to the dehumanising and the impersonal nature of the prevailing culture.

It is our belief that God is asking us to become evangelists and to help revitalise His Church, to bring His followers back to His Church, to grow His Church once again and to give Him back His people not only in Australia but worldwide. God is asking us to pray and have faith that “his will, will be done on earth” he wants us to have the courage to speak out and defend his name, and speak out for the poor and disadvantaged. God asks us to pray and support our Church leaders, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit, that they be re-energised like the 12 apostles were over 2,000 years ago. At every opportunity we should speak out and point out that the Church in spite of its failures is a force for good and stability in our world. The Catholic Church in Australia is the largest provider of Social Services and Education after Governments. Further we are being asked to follow Christ Jesus, to be more Christ like and to bring peace to His creation. We are being asked to act now, do not procrastinate but move forward for we do not know when the end will come. We all have different gifts we are being asked to use those gifts to evangelise, to spread His word, his teachings, to proclaim God’s love for us. We have to accept that these are trying times, where an ever-increasing number of people not only put themselves before others, but seem to delight in ridiculing Christian beliefs. God wants us to be faithful, fight the good fight and

encourage our children and grandchildren to be the best that they can be. God is always close to us, we just need to listen.

God is asking us to rally together to make positive change for the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is at a critical crossroad. Things must change if the Church is to prosper and have any relevance in our lives. The Church has failed to move with the times and remain in touch with the needs of its own community. The Australian public will never accept and recognise the good that the Church does if we continue to present a hardened, arrogant approach to the very different world in which we live. The Church must represent the community of the 21st century.

To find courage and faith in this dark time of the Catholic Church in Australia. To look deep within ourselves to try to find meaning of it all. To stand up for the marginalised, poorest of the poor, children, refugees, people sick in body and in mind, to respect all, etc. To stand against the wrongdoings of the Church. To find faith and not reject God, but reject those within the institution who have sinned against God and humanity. To educate, to empower, to advocate. To connect with God.

God is asking that we as a Church are aligned with the teachings of Jesus—fully and truthfully, not just in words or even actions but in our true belief and justice for humanity and our planet. We need to have a better understanding of our people and how to get the message of hope and justice to them—truly. Too many are disillusioned by the Church, particularly in light of its wrongdoings and whilst we know there is much more on offer from our Church it is forgotten or taken for granted. If we are to survive as a Church, we must genuinely embrace change—we need to have more leadership for women in our Church—not tokenism but true positions of authority and guiding change. We cannot continue to be based on an archaic model of authority and expect to survive. Our world is far too rapidly changing and growing. What was once considered impossible is not. No other organisation in the world has not changed its leadership structure and expected to survive. While women are kept out of the hierarchy it is doomed to fail. Further, the restrictions put upon men in their roles are unsustainable. Men and Women the world over have families and full time important, world changing careers—there is no reason the Church cannot embrace this. There needs to be far more governance in terms of accountability by the hierarchy - in parishes, schools and diocese to ensure the people of the Church have faith and belief in the system.

Through interpreting the word of the Lord and praying for guidance I believe I am being directed to help young people learn to be more resilient through affirmations gained in community participation. The most effective affirmations for young people of all natures and characteristics are to be found in inclusive and cooperative environments allowing for creative thinking, while allowing individual expression that take into account the strengths and weaknesses of each young person. A music making environment provides the ideal fertile ground upon which a young person can fulfil their potential, as God would wish it. Learning a musical instrument allows a young person to express from their soul what can only be said through music while they can also be with others in a non-judgemental environment— a supportive community with a common goal. Within our Catholic schools music is (mostly) only available to those who pay—who can afford it. This restriction is one of the most serious impediments to young people's growth. Since music education is mandated by the Church, and music is our strongest mode of evangelisation it is

curious that the structures within our school placed upon music making are so restrictive and the importance of music are so poorly understood.

I think we are in crisis time in our Australian Catholic Church, and I realise it is a time to be as open to the Spirit as we can be. It is quite amazing that we have able to have this Plenary Council at all and I think it is time that every person's voice, man or woman, be heard by the bishops and priests. It is time for every sector to present ideas and then discern truly where the Spirit is leading us at this time.

To be inclusive, non-judgmental and caring. For too long it has seemed that we Catholics thought we were the ones with all the answers. We alone had the hot line to God. I don't think it matters what we call God—God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Allah or Buddha. The essential thing seems to be that we follow Christ's loving example and "love our neighbours as ourselves for love of God."

Listening to the Spirit I keep hearing the phrase "Catholic education for all Catholics". This comes from the fact that most Catholic children are not in Catholic schools. Nation-wide the statistics show that most Catholic schools in Australia are populated by mostly non Catholics. This means that most Catholic children are missing out on good education in and around Catholic teachings. I believe it is now time that the Church focuses on educating the faithful in the parishes. Many Catholic families do not send their children for various reasons (costs can be one) to Catholic schools and therefore miss out on Catholic teaching. Catholic families need support in raising their children in the faith.

I began my adult ministry in the Church (as a baptised lay woman) in the late 1970s. The then Archbishop of [-], [-], who had participated in the Second Vatican Council, constantly encouraged his people with the mantra: "You are the Church, take up your baptismal calling". It was a time of great energy and hope. Ordinary people studied theology and scripture, small groups met to reflect on their faith, all sorts of new outreach programs developed as people realised that they could make a difference to the Church and to the world. It was also a time when people took seriously that idea that "the restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council." (UR #1) Suddenly dialogue groups were popping up everywhere as we got to know our fellow Christians in the other Churches. We prayed together, studied together and took on community action together as we acknowledged the pain of the past 450 years (and 1000 years in the case of our Eastern sisters and brothers) and asked for forgiveness. As time went on we also began to realise that the Church had a new vision about our relationship with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus etc. "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions" (NA #2). Here was a chance to build community across all faiths as Australia became more and more multicultural. This is not a nostalgia trip! No doubt the Church had as many problems in the 1970s as it has today. And I know that the reality on the ground was often very different from what was being encouraged. What I look for is the spirit/Spirit of the times. A time when all the baptised feel empowered to be the Church. Archbishop [-] made the following remarks at the Closing Mass of the Summit on Protection of Minors in Rome (24 February 2019) "The pastors of the Church, like David, have received a gift of power—power however to serve, to create; a power that is with and for but not over; ... As we look to the future, let's put the Code of Canon Law back on the shelf for a while and pick up the

Gospels and the Documents of the Second Vatican Council. (Perhaps we could suggest to Rome that the Code might be revised in the light of the other two sets of documents!!) Let's think laterally to see how the Church can really be the People of God. Let's review structures, especially those which involve significant power, to see how they can better respond to a very different world. Instead of retreating into our ghettos because of decreasing clergy numbers and aging populations, let's try to find imaginative ways that we can work with other Christians in our area (who are experiencing the same problems) to be a Gospel presence in our communities. Let's work at developing relationships with all people of faith in a world that is becoming increasingly secular and anti-religion. Primarily, let's base all that we do on a spirit of compassion and mercy.

We submit the following description of the Spirituality of Communion we aim to live. Following is an excerpt (written by Fr [-]) from 'Let Your Light Shine' 'Vision, priorities and planning for a vibrant local Church' ARCHDIOCESE OF [-] 28/7/2004

God is really wanting me and all other Catholics/Christians to recognize His presence within us, in our hearts, and there to hear His voice and to feel His for each one of us. Therefore, God wants all of us, and all of us individually, to become contemplative. To this end, each diocese in Australia ought to set a Prayer House which would be well advertised and its purpose clearly stated.

For more prayers, for more faith, hope and charity in the lives of His people and for the Church to be more understanding of the many and varied faithful. For people like me who are in their mid to late 70s who do not own a car and who are unable to attend Mass regularly.

Confucius said: "If you want to go forward look to the past." How did the followers of Jesus grow and multiply? In Acts it says: wait for the Holy Spirit and they had a prayer meeting for several days. 7 weeks later when the believers met everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit. The apostles met regularly at the appointed times in Solomon's Hall in the Temple to worship and do remarkable miracles among the people. Father God in the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to know that Jesus is the head of the Church. My calling in life is to keep my eyes on Him and follow Him and to be with like-minded people. They will encourage me and help me to develop my full potential in Him. At the same time I ask the Holy Spirit to show me how to help others to do the same.

How do we authentically recontextualise the practices and teachings of the Catholic Church? Since Vatican II, the Church decontextualised itself but in the last fifty years the world has changed significantly again. As Pope Frances says, We're not facing an era of change, we're facing a change of era. How are we moving towards a new era with new experiences and, openness and change relationships? How does the Church purport these rules with scant regard for diversity and inclusion (age; technology; medicine; changing ethics; sexuality)? We need a willingness to critique the Catholic traditions and structures and be up for the challenge of relevant in current contexts. e.g.: structure of the liturgy; structure of patriarchal hierarchy; limitation of celibacy; exclusion of women in ministry; accountability of decisions and resources.

God is asking for the Council to listen to those who are involved in the education of music as they are the people who know firsthand of the benefits of music in education to young people in all schools including Catholic schools as well as all Senior members of society.

I believe God is asking us to support Aboriginal Ministry with priest. Bishops to show support by presiding over NAIDOC Sunday Eucharist. 1 Prayer of Faithful for 1st People. Acknowledgement of Country at every Mass.

I think God, as always, is asking that we respect and treat each other with the dignity each of us deserves. After all we are taught we were created in the image of God. Many times we fail to live up to that standard and now some extremely serious failings of the past have to be acknowledged and swift reparation has to be made. Steps are being put into place to ensure that such injustices do not occur again but are the survivors believed and treated with adequate compensation and in a prompt manner? These people were not treated with the dignity they had a right to expect and this must be rectified. We are taught our God is a loving father and one of the best examples of Jesus' teaching regarding this is the parable that Jesus told—The Prodigal Son. When his son returned home ready to ask forgiveness, the father did not sit on his veranda, waiting for the son to list all his failings. No he ran out to lovingly embrace him and welcome him home. And I found that welcome in the Third Rite of Reconciliation. Parishioners went together to the sacrament, admitting our sinfulness, and asking forgiveness. And it was given in a generous, loving manner. We knew if we had serious sin we needed to make private confession. We are adults. We have a brain. We are intelligent beings. We make important decisions. We are, after all, created in the image of God. But we were denied the joy and peace and beauty of the Third Rite and the wall went up and control reimposed. Yes we still have the sacrament of Reconciliation but how many Catholics celebrate it? And how many Catholics saw this as an insult to our dignity? I certainly did. And how many Catholics have stepped away from the Church because of this controlling attitude? We are taught our God is our Creator. If we believe this then we must also believe our God is a scientific God. Scientists have been sounding the alarm that our planet is in serious trouble for decades. Refugees are moving around, trying to find a better life for their families. People flee wars and die of starvation. What science-based support is the Church giving to people to plan the size of their families so that they can give their children a better life, to ensure our planet is not overpopulated? What does the Church teach about the responsibility each of us—male and female—has for our fertility? And where is the voice of women heard regarding this extremely important factor in our planet's survival? How can sometimes-celibate men have the lived experience to make judgements on behalf of all God's people? Where is the respect for the dignity of all when science is ignored and unnecessary hardship is imposed on God's people?

That we be more inclusive a) relationally, of all people, focussing out beyond Church boundaries, b) in organisation, including lay people especially women in leadership and decision-making, c) in active care for the environment.

That we live authentically to love one another. That demands diversity and inclusion; where all people are valued equally and are represented in the many dimensions of the Church. That we are all accountable for our actions and behaviours. That we are seen as less of a rule based Church but one that is listening to the signs of the times in responding appropriately to technological changes, while remaining compassionate.

God is asking us to:

—let the people run the community

- help people feel that by doing your share you are connected to the community
- help communities to move beyond the Church and to the home
- Church communities to know people by names
- create a Church experience that is more attractive to young people
- have more programs in the Church to connect people together (e.g. Alpha)
- create a Church where we might not have Mass every week, but we have Church (i.e. community)
- to attract, invite and retain young people in the Church.

That all people, lay and ordained, examine our attitudes, assumptions and behaviour to recognise and eliminate any signs of a sense of entitlement or special treatment, either for ourselves or others.

To form a cooperative structure of bishop, priests, religious and laity to lead and oversight the leadership and management of the Church. This could be done by a group of people working together as a Pastoral Council of the diocese or as a group of 6 or 8 on an elected "Board". There would be an equal number of women and laity. This governance structure would report to the bishop. The various activities would be managed using experienced managers and not relying on priests to have all the skills other than pastoral skills. Accountability and transparency would be required.

Power corrupts...and ultimate power has fundamentally continued to corrupt the Catholic Church for the past 2,000 years. We need to truly (in both word and action) become the powerless Church and be total devoted (both its priests and followers) to doing permanent penance via the continuous undertaking of social works at a local, regional, and international level in very humble ways. Clergy must learn to live with the people (and get their hands dirty) and never again seek to rule the people and live like princes. The clerical Church need to remain solely focused on being the religious teachers/theologian guides among the people. All priests, bishops, and cardinals need to get out of Church building...get away from Church administration...stop becoming bureaucratic clerical careerist...and do their entire ministry on the streets and via physical social actions/interactions.

That the Church and its ministries be a living witness to its teachings and wisdom, so that those people who are working diligently within its ministries can be proud of being part of a Church that is authentically living its mission to love one another and truly enable flourishing of each person, society and the world. A Church that is diverse and inclusive:

- where all people are equally valued and represented in positions of leadership.
- where transparency and accountability are real.
- where there is openness to listen and respond to the signs of the times.

—where ethical 'rules' are replaced by moral, theologically sound, pastoral and compassionate responses to the realities of people of the 21st century, and there is openness to learning and the wisdom to interpret for today to provide guidance.

—where people can regain trust because as a Church we have demonstrated authentic openness and transparency.

—where Church ministries which are currently open, transparent, law abiding, seeking to deliver the highest levels of compassionate care, are central to the Church's strategic future; and not treated as appendages or subordinate to the clerical Church.

—that our ministries—whether in education, social services, healthcare—are legitimately recognised as Church; particularly for those people who may have been so damaged or traumatised by Church in their past, that this is their only experience of a compassionate, loving Church.

To strengthen the Church.

I have been a Christian Scientist for 45 years and have had 4 life threatening spiritual healing successes thanks be to God. (i.e. the Christ came into my consciousness). That is what Jesus meant when he said he would come again. The Christ has come to all who really learn to understand God, it came to the profets long before Jesus' time enabling them to carry out the so called miracles they did. I know we were not your favourite brand in the past perhaps because we are opposed to pantheism, (i.e. believing man is both spiritual and material). Second Genesis is a man-made version of creation. First Genesis is short but the true version of creation and fits exactly with everything Jesus taught. (i.e. the flesh profiteth nothing...) I am aware that your Church is doing its highest as far as you understand God and I admire you for your wonderful humanitarian services you carry out to promote the Christian cause as Jesus told us to do. Not just by preaching but by demonstrating. If Christianity can't be demonstrated it is not Christianity but merely mind over matter, or faith healing. By the way healing went on for 200 years after Jesus' time before it became a lost art. I don't wish to insult your Church in any way but can you see how similar your doctrines are to the Pharisees of Jesus' time. They even criticized Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. Christianity is a science, it is demonstrable, provable, and repeatable in this day and age. Christian Science has been proving this in millions and millions of cases over the past 150 years. If only your vast Church with its millions of followers were taught to heal spiritually as Jesus told us to do you could quadruple Christianity in a very short time. What caused me to write to you today was my concern regarding the Cardinal Pell case. I am a stickler for justice and Justice must be seen to be done, nevertheless we all have heard of cases where the law is said to be a fool, but it is the best we have. I think it needs to be demonstrated in a closed court how Pell could remove his vast one piece robe sufficiently to engage in a sexual act. In Australia we are all aware of the tall poppy syndrome (i.e. a lot of people like to see a notable or wealthy figure brought down). I feel sure it would have been almost impossible to find a jury unbiased especially after months and years of cases of sexual abuse by clergy of various Churches. Now we all know that treating the symptoms of a problem does not find the cause of the problem or fix the problem. Some of your rules formulated way back in the dim past say that priests and nuns should be married to the Church to be closer to God. I personally have proved that by my four healings, as that cannot happen unless

the Christ enters one`s consciousness (Emmanuel). We are all familiar with the allegory of the talking serpent constantly snapping at our heels (devil or evil thoughts). We have just had a Royal commission into institutional sexual misbehaviour.

Firstly, I believe we need to look at what is the role that we can provide for women. It seems this issue has been circling around the Church, for instance, the ordination of women. Secondly, as a Church, we need to provide more opportunities for young people and make it more attracted and interesting to be in the Church. Lastly, we need to provide more resources available to the laity to deepen their understanding about the faith especially the basic Catechism.

(1) The question needs to be addressed 'How many Churches did Jesus founded or start? If the answer is one! Then how do we communicate that to community and beyond. What is the Church's position on this foundation question? (In 62 years of faith practice I have never been or encouraged to address the matter of the 'Birth of the Catholic Church'. Is this a personal faith issue or a Church responsibility issue?) (2) Research into Catholic Religious curriculum, materials and theological studies for Religious Teachers, there is no reference to the 'Birth of the Catholic Church'. (A foundation understanding) As a retired educator I see that lesson design to cover the rich genealogy of the birth of the Church would take 14 weeks, with rich research and access to the words and the message in the Bible, a dictionary of our faith. (3) During informal conversation at inter parish level gatherings acknowledgment regarding the 'Birth of the Catholic Church' is absent or little intermittent understanding on the genealogy of the birth of the Church. (4) These exchanges include parents and teachers. They know when, but not how it came to be established, not only the mystical body of Jesus Christ, but the fabric of our faith. In other exchanges parishioners stated, does it really matter. (5) So, how do we as a Church build a faith based community on such foundations? (6) How do we evangelise, if we do not individually understand the genealogy of the Church's origins with confidence? (7) What message do we give to those we reach out to, if we do not understand the message ourselves? (8) If we are challenged by another faith, how do we respond if we do not understand our origins. (e.g. Reformation Period) (9) There is no confidence expressed by Catholics in this context. (apprehensive in engaging) (10) In this same context, not many understood Mary's role in the Birth of the Church? (This is ashamed taking into account the lack of understanding of Mary's role in our faith foundations.)

Reconcile being the Church in an increasingly secular society. Continue to speak up on pertinent issues consistent with Catholic Church beliefs. However, also increase ecumenism as we agree on so many issues. One issue to speak up on is increasing inequality in Australia and its effects. The Church does so much good in practical ways e.g. St Vincent de Paul, but we need to be vocal re causes of poverty. (the Banking Royal Commission exposed the "greed is good " mentality prevalent. Continue to address seriously the horrendous abuse of children in the past.

Reclaim morality, Allow greater involvement of the laity, and in particular women, Increased focus on the youth, Allow priests the sacrament of Marriage, Reinvigorate the three sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation

1. EVANGELISATION • Teach us how to properly evangelise. • Be a positive voice in an increasingly anti-God world. • Be vocal in promoting our life causes. • Be a Church of missionary disciples. • Be passionate, pray for wisdom to lead—BE LOVE! • Lobbying by Church authorities on issues such as

euthanasia, abortion and refugees.

2. FAITH FORMATION • Get back to basics. • To act justly and reach out in our own lives. • To love one another as God loves us. • To keep the faith. • Be a good Christian and have God in your life. • Opportunity for a longer Mass i.e. longer homily to aid adult faith development. • Engage children more and their parents (schools). • To speak up for the unborn. • Stay strong and uphold our Catholic doctrine, defend it as the apostles did. The Holy Spirit is not asking us to water down God's teaching and commandments. Resist society's pressure to break down Church teaching. • To be more forgiving, to be with the times, to be more upbeat. • That people think more spiritual than material and that more effort in schools to that end. • That people think more spiritual than material and that more effort in schools to that end. • Alive and interesting sacramental preparation for children • Investment in parishes to raise and form leaders according to individual gifts • Support families in faith development—strengthen faith foundation; make faith a priority; listen more. • Be the hands and feet of Jesus—serve others and may our words be His words. • Deepen our level of spirituality—trust God. • Support families in schools. Fearlessness and respect. • Provide funding for parishes to pay suitably qualified people a just wage in service of the Church • Invest in young people for study in theology and scripture and employ them to use their knowledge. • Strict adherence to rules is making it difficult to keep volunteers. • Grow our understanding of biblical application to our life—explain Scriptures. • I would love to see Bible study groups for Catholics in every parish in Australia. Through joining a protestant Bible group I have been shown a deep love of Scripture. • More investment in parish to form leaders in theology and scripture—leadership. • Focus on the message of Jesus • Programs of education for families and the marginalised • Lobbying by Church authorities on issues such as euthanasia, abortion and refugees.

3. COMMUNICATION AND ECUMENISM • Bring back a sense of community • Stronger leadership from top. Push back about political correctness. Listen to silent majority, not just listen to noisy minority. • More friendly and more helpful—talk to people • Own what you say and do, listen with a heart of love and compassion, be positive—give hope to others—allow the Holy Spirit to speak. • More dialogue—inter-Church • Be open to learning from people of other faiths

4. INCLUSIVENESS/ SERVICE TO THE POOR/ SOCIAL JUSTICE • Why was Peter Kennedy so successful in attracting a large dis... community? Answer that and you have your answer. • Marriage equality. • Why was bishop Bill Morris sacked and silenced? He was extremely popular and reflected a view held by many. • To accept all and be a real community. • Be aware of people's needs. • To be very tolerant of others inside and outside the Church. • To be more understanding of all people, thoughtful to each other—selfless. • To care more, to be kind to all—to love our neighbour. • The Church needs to speak out for refugees in detention. • Bring back a sense of community. • Stronger leadership from top. Push back about political correctness. Listen to silent majority, not just listen to noisy minority. • Foster gratitude, be generous, open to the needs of the times—kind to elderly, young people. • Be grateful for all the benefits we have in this country. Help those less fortunate especially children and elderly. • Be an inclusive Church, love unconditionally—non-judgemental; care for the poor. • Our parish work with the poor is now

addressed by hundreds of other agencies and we lose our 'community approach'. • The Church of the future must be inclusive. • Be more forgiving of divorced people—often through no fault of their own—no choice. Eucharist should be for everyone. • Look at marriage Laws and keeping the divorced from receiving communion is failing Catholic families. • Separate civil marriage from Church—maybe a Church blessing. • Eucharist is for everyone for we are all sinners. • Be a more inclusive Church that looks more like Jesus—servants. • Inclusiveness and openness—not just rehearsed or safe answers

5. WOMEN IN THE CHURCH • The role of women in leadership • Gender equality—more women in leadership and decision-making positions. • Give women more roles in authority. Scott Hahn • The voice of lay women be really heard and able to allow to participate in decision-making. • Admit women to the diaconate • Women in leadership positions where their gifts can be used • Uphold the dignity of women by including them in leadership positions and panels

6. FORMATION OF CLERGY AND ONGOING DEVELOPMENT • Stronger leadership from top. Push back about political correctness. Listen to silent majority, not just listen to noisy minority. • Encouragement for more religious—maybe allow more married people into ministry. • Administrative duties be taken from priests—pastoral—state school chaplain. • Priests to be pastors and lay people to be administrators. • Clerics to genuinely promote Alpha. • Consider that priests could marry. • Admit women to the diaconate and allow priests to choose marriage or not. • Ongoing development and support of clergy especially those from different cultures. • Selection and training of priests needs to have more grounding in the "real world". • Clericalism is an issue—should not be about power, but about service.

7. LAY LEADERSHIP • Administrative duties be taken from priests—pastoral—state school chaplain. • The role of women in leadership • Priests to be pastors and lay people to be administrators. • Investment in parishes to raise and form leaders according to individual gifts. • More Lay leadership and provide training for leaders. • Funding for parishes to pay suitably qualified people a just wage to work in parish. • Harness the capacity of the 'baby boomers'—they have kept the faith and have wisdom to mentor the younger generations. • More investment in parish to form leaders in theology and scripture—leadership.

8. SUNDAY MASS • Opportunity for a longer Mass i.e. longer homily to aid adult faith development. • Stay strong and uphold our Catholic doctrine, defend it as the apostles did. The Holy Spirit is not asking us to water down God's teaching and commandments. Resist society's pressure to break down Church teaching. • The Church needs to encourage the youth back to attendance at Mass and functions. • Adult faith formation as part of weekly Mass. • Good music ministry is critically important—better to have recorded music than terrible voices. • Allow a variety of voices to be heard on Sunday breaking open Scripture—not just celibate males. • Focus on the message of Jesus. • The message needs to be relevant and clear.

9. YOUTH • Engage children more and their parents (schools). • The Church needs to encourage the youth back to attendance at Mass and functions. • That people think more spiritual than

material and that more effort in schools to that end. • Alive and interesting sacramental preparation for children. • Invest in young people for study in theology and scripture and employ them to use their knowledge. • More defined sacramental program to ensure consistency.

We really need to renew the Church to serve our God and the needs of all people in 2019. Simple really. What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8) Our Church has developed over thousands of years and has so many rules and beliefs that it is hard to reconcile them with the gospels. It is impossible to see the mercy and unconditional love of God there. The Church hierarchy assumes power over all things including our entry to eternal life. The same priests, bishops and cardinals have enabled sexual abuse by protecting the paedophiles. My people have been lost sheep, their shepherds have led them astray. (Jeremiah 50:6). The Church has been ensnared by the very thing that they have obsessively sought to control for both clergy and laity—sexuality. The hierarchy response to the jailing of priests, bishops and cardinals has been appalling. We need to become a Church of repentance and humility and to have compassion and love for their victims? We need to support our priests who have been terribly let down and unsupported. When a young person might consider a priest and think that there is a man who is happy and is really helping people in a loving and worthwhile way, I might become a priest, then we will have it right and we will have Australian born men in the seminaries. The laity have been terribly let down. They have to live with the shame and hatred coming from the sexual abuse and the protection of paedophiles by the clergy. The hierarchy have given them no say in the running of the Church or Church doctrine. Let us remember that we are all sons and daughters of God and should be treated with love and respect. That will lead to giving lay women and men input and responsibility for all areas of the new Church structure. The hierarchy have been given many talents in the laity both female and male. These talents have been squandered by the Church by denying all but the select few a share of the priesthood and a say in the Church. Mathew 25:30 talks of the misuse of talents. The big stick that the Church uses to control the laity is sin. There are those who do not meet the standards of the Church to the letter. Jesus loves them and mixed with them. The Church abandons them and withholds communion from them. Remember that we all need food for the journey. Let us become a Church focused on the love of God rather than condemnation of sinners.

In this time I think God is asking of us in Australia to return to the first and greatest commandment: to love God above all and with all. In order to do that it is first necessary to get to know God as He has revealed Himself. So the first task God is asking of us is then to return to a depth of catechesis in the Catholic Faith that produces faithful who know in a deep way what God has revealed to us about Himself and about us. Going from knowing God we have to move to loving God in a personal way which means returning to using the means he has given us: that we learn to live a profound sacramental life (particularly through the Eucharist and confession) and we learn to pray intimately with God. This will enable us to respond to God's wish that we be saints (Eph 1:4 and 1 Thess 4:3). Sanctity is what God is asking of us to be put it into a nutshell. This leads to the "Great Commission" of Our Lord—to go to all nations proclaiming the good news. God is asking us that, knowing Him and loving Him, we bring others to Him. That we have that deep sense that God wants to use us as instruments to bring the world to him. God is also asking us in this time that we recognise that the role of the laity is to live out their vocation in the middle

of the world. There has been a tendency in the last 50 years to "clericalism" the laity by seeing their proper vocation as "intra-ecclesial" whereas, in fact, the role of the laity is "extra-ecclesial". The clerics are meant to serve the laity with their ministry (preaching, sacraments and guidance) in order that the laity can serve the world (with their love for God and their ordinary lives). "Clericalising" the laity by seeing their roles as limited to Church ministries neuters the laity and limits the Church's capacity to carry out the "Great Commission". Another area that I think God is asking of us is the re-evangelisation of the family. As the institutions of the Church have become moribund (i.e. the parishes and the schools in particular), the "domus ecclesia" is the preeminent place for the re-evangelisation of Catholics and the world. Hence, a primary focus on the Church is on the family—forming it as a place of a lively Catholic faith, which draws in other families and produces vocations of priests, religious and dedicated lay people. Without a focus on the family the Church will not fulfil its mission in the world. This focus on the family includes a focus on forming strong long-lasting marriages that are capable of evangelising the culture, rather than being affected and destroyed by the culture.

I think God asks us to keep our faith. Serve our fellow man. Celebrate what we have in common. Acknowledge, respectfully what we have that's different. Live with and share the joy of the Lord. We are richly blessed. Let's not waste a moment in misery or negativity. Let's move forward in faith and joy.

For the Church to re-attain its mantle as a compassionate, caring, trustworthy and inclusive entity.

To the Australian Council of bishops—The [-] Council would like to thank [-] Community in [-] for the invitation to contribute to this important time of discernment being undertaken by the bishops. In particular, we have reflected on two questions: a. What is the Spirit saying to the Church? b. How should the Church evangelise the nation? To do this we are guided by the instructions of our Lord Jesus recorded in John 17 in seeking a deeper and more profound unity of the Spirit. As a Council we see ourselves as your brothers and sisters. The Council believes that the bishops would be bolstered in their leading of the Church in Australia by reconsidering the stories of Jesus once more and allowing his word to capture anew your hearts so that His word may become manifested in fresh deeds. We have jointly reflected that devotion is part of the bedrock of the Church that you lead and the Spirit is calling for a deeper intimacy with Jesus. This will release a deeper revelation of the Spirit and His miraculous power once more into the life of Catholics across the Country. The sense of the Council was that in light of the depth of heritage and history in the gospel that you carry that the effect of a fresh renewal of intimacy would be a powerful transformative influence for Australia; that Jesus is calling you to just living and renewed charity. Receive the Lord's invitation to sell what you have to feed the poor and you will find riches beyond your understanding. We believe that there is a call from the Lord to you for you to re-discover the depths of your relationship with Christ through the person of the Holy Spirit rather than looking for a new praxis of activity. The call is to remember all the Spirit of the Lord has said to you and to be obedient to that truth. To engage the future by aligning yourselves to the wisdom and understanding of Jesus and His mission in the earth that has already been revealed to you by the Holy Spirit; Ancient-future balances will come back into everything you do. Insights will come as you listen to one another. From within your own tradition will come men and women who will bring fresh encouragement and wisdom and they will be surprising sources of

encouragement. The Council encourages you not to be anxious for the season before you is a season of relief. The Lord will come with all the saints with balm for all your wounds.
Love everyone.
To rethink the role of lay ministry is a more formal way in the Church. To investigate and invest in formational ministry such as Catechesis of the Good Shepherd where children have a space that is not IT focussed to engage with the Church in a meaningful way.
Respect one another.
To be creative in the way we evangelise. To meet others where they are at and find ways for people to connect with the sacred. For the Church to find ways to allow many voices to speak and be heard. To find ways to be a Church without 'politics' and favouritism.
Acceptance, welcoming people in need into our country and lives helping all people, not just the ones that we are comfortable with.
Love each other.
To instil kindness in our day to day interactions. To believe in something.
To love each other as He loves us. To be forgiving and to model the Gospel Values.
We are asked to be a loving and open Church, meeting people where they are at.
Exactly what he has been asking of everybody since the beginning of time. The ten commandments are in place and this, the crux of moral values and religious integrity.
I think that God is asking us to try and live better lives and participate as a community of Catholics.
God is asking us to care for the marginalised and the environment and to nurture our prayer life and spirituality.
At this emotive time, I believe God is asking us to reconsider how it utilises and values its members i.e. the laity, the family and women. They are the foundation of the Church. In generations past, the laity was uneducated. In those times, clergy were the source of knowledge and Church. Now is the time to recognise that the laity especially women, have a lot more to offer the Church than they have in the past. In the patriarchal era of His time, Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene after His Resurrection, not the disciples, which went against the prevailing attitudes of the time. However, the paternalistic attitude of male hierarchy of the Church has continued throughout history, ignoring the importance of women as well as married men for centuries. The Church needs to recognise that paternalistic attitudes and secrecy don't sit well with educated laity. Vocation numbers are down as becoming a priest isn't seen as a viable career in this secular society. With the events of the last few years and the scandals they have brought, it seems the Church is rotten from the core out. This is clearly not the case, but it is how it is by outsiders and many insiders as well. Now is the time to make a stand to improve the situation, to make it open and accountable and to fully utilise the talents and education of its members I believe that God is asking the Church in Australia to: 1. Accept married priests into the clergy; 2. Fully utilise women including allowing for women priests—both single and married; 3. Recognising the skills and education that laity bring to the Church in these times; 4. Accept that scandalous

behaviour needs to be exposed and eradicated and that laity have a role in ensuring that healing and the Church's good name is restored.

That the light of Christ can be known throughout the land and seen by the actions of the people of God walking in his footsteps. That the Church, including its schools and hospitals throughout our land, now step forward to increase its support of the homeless and marginalised peoples, domestic violence victims and those affected by racial discrimination and gender inequality.

How do we listen to the voice of the people of God, not just the hierarchy? To consider that it has taken 80 years to offer this opportunity for consultation. The need for recontextualisation but also the need to acknowledge diversity. People's experience and encounter with God must meet the needs of all people. It must be flexible enough and inclusive enough, so that people are led to an encounter with the divine.

I think God is calling for a new beginning after the terrible revelations of the Royal Commission and the conviction of Cardinal Pell. I think God wants us to be brave and to show that we are responsive to the call of Her or His people. IF the Church does not respond appropriately at this time, even more members will drain away. There is a lot of anger at the Church and the arrogance displayed by many of those in power. The Church has lost its way, and largely its relevance to an increasing number of people. God wants us re-imagined.

Us—the people of God—the ordained and the laity (we share a common baptism). • That we live out what we are called to be as Catholics; • That we live out the prayer (the commitment and the hope) of our baptism; • That we (clergy and laity) as the Church, be individually and collectively inclusive rather than exclusive; • That we the laity be told how the ordained are being formed. That we be informed of the boundaries between the ordained and the laity in matters of sacramental programs, laity formation, financial management of parish funds laity responsibility for no-sacramental roles within the parish and broader Church life. • That we the laity be educated about our right to baptise in an emergency; • That we the laity support the ordained in their respective roles; • That we the laity be involved in some way in our parish life, no matter how small; • That as Catholics, we become actively involved in some form of pastoral care within our community; • That the laity have access to a permanent forum through which they may talk to and be listened to by the hierarchy; • That the laity be regularly informed about the conversation between the laity and the hierarchy; • That all be advised about the clear boundaries in the roles of parish priest, Deacon and the laity; • While honouring the integrity of the majority of priests, deacons and religious, we also acknowledge the failures (the handling of sexual abuse), the corrosiveness of clericalism, sexism and stifling paternalism; • We, the Church must not lay any of the blame for such failures at the feet of the laity.

I think that God is asking the same questions now that God has asked in the past and will ask in the future? What evidence is there which shows how the Catholic Church is a leader in the community in matters of love, mercy and justice?

I think God wants us to open the doors of the Church and go out as individuals to discern the face of Jesus in everyone we encounter and to discern the goodness of Jesus in everything we encounter. It's easy to discern the face of Jesus among those we see at Mass, or among those who are employed at the cathedral or in any of the Church's social welfare organisations, but I think

Jesus wants us to cast our gaze much, much wider than that. Henri Nouwen said to choose joy at the start of each day as a conscious predisposition. We have something monumental to share in the good news of the gospel. Our day must radiate that joy, whatever we do; however we may feel we must never be without hope. We must offer joy and hope to everyone we meet, softly and calmly. We must be not merely kind to others, to all others, but people actively seeking encounter with others, however that may be asked of us. Whatever effort it may take, we will not think to count the cost in doing the work of Jesus, because we walk alongside another in his name not ours, in joy and hope and companionship. Rowan Williams writes of Jesus: "As (in italics) the incarnate and crucified, he lives." (Christ, the Heart of Creation, 2018, p.242) The Mass gives us the strength and courage we need to be sojourners for Jesus, living life to the full, not for ourselves but for the kingdom we are helping in infinitesimal ways to bring about. The Mass is indispensable. Without our adoration of God through Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, we are as creatures untethered.

I believe God is asking the Church to be more relatable to the youth and young people of our society. In a world that is constantly growing, it is essential that our Church grows with it. Without change, the Church will lose its people. As a 19 year old in a Church dominated by an older demographic, I struggle sometimes to relate to sermons targeted at this demographic. Society's views are constantly changing, and if the Church doesn't adapt to this, young people will lose interest and ultimately lose their connection with God. Another aspect is the marginalisation of the LGBTQI community from the Church. We're living in a time where this demographic is rapidly growing, and the Church needs to be doing more to show its support. At my parish, I know of multiple gay people who have been forced out of the Church due to being made to feel like an outcast or an "abomination" as some might say. This is simply not ok and something needs to change. God tells us to love our neighbours and at this time, I don't see the Church doing that. It breaks my heart and fills me with disgust that this is still happening in the 21st century. A way this could improve is by allowing gay marriage in the Catholic Church. Many of my friends who are gay have been denied this right, and therefore, have left the Church and lost their Catholic faith all together. This is NOT what the Catholic faith is about. Our values should remain, at the most fundamental level, to be welcoming, compassionate, loving, and to be the hands and feet of Jesus. I often feel ashamed that my Church can be so discriminatory towards those who only want to be loved, but feel they have to protect the evil in the Church like George Pell. This is so twisted, and something needs to be done about that. Finally, I believe the Church needs an increase in its inclusion of women in the Church. Not necessarily female priests, but women doing sermons, more women in the archdiocese, and more female role models in the Church. I believe this would be beneficial to our Church, in that, different opinions and values would arise, thus, increasing diversity in the Church.

I am sure God would be asking where the Church has gone wrong in Australia. He would be asking us to return our faith to one based on love and humility—not structures, pomp and ceremony. He would be asking us to make the Church real to younger people.

I am sure God is asking us to : • Open our doors wide and condemn the wrong doing, • Combine our efforts to rebuild trust—accepting women into our ranks is essential to do this, • Recognise the great work women are doing in the Church.

The Church needs to be serious about making change to its governance. It has to become more inclusive. There need to be leaders who are both lay people and female (of sound Theological knowledge and qualification). I am not for one moment saying that there needs to be any change in the sacramental duties, only in the leadership. The culture has to change whereby clergy are not above these new leaders and that they are able to report to them if necessary. Without a shift in culture, change is going to be very difficult and not seen as important to the people. Take for example the culture change that has had to occur in Australia Cricket. One way to seriously change the culture would be to allow priests to marry (if they wish). The Church has to be seen to be accountable for past errors before moving forward. I think there needs to be a Youth transformation facilitator in the Archdiocese. There needs to be a dedicated young priest who can visit parishes for Youth Masses. Someone who the youth can relate to and connect to. This would be investing in the future. I think there needs to be a weekly (Sunday night) Mass with Music that the youth choose, in their own parish (or at least in the Deanery). They need to be involved in the liturgy. The dedicated priest would be able to Celebrate Mass here on a rostered basis. Visiting priests could also be involved. But I feel weekly Sunday night and Music choice is the absolute basic necessity. It would become natural for the youth to get together socially after Mass and this could only lead to good things. My final recommendation is to do with school / parish involvement and the sacramental Program. It would be great to see school and parish taking full responsibility for this (with the added bonus coming from the family). School teachers need to be more knowledgeable about the Mass so they can teach the children what to do during Mass, rather than looking uncomfortable themselves. (I acknowledge that many are doing a great job but there are too many who are not). I am the first to admit that behaviour in Mass should have been taught from home way before the children even start school but looking around Mass on a weekly basis this is obviously not the case. So, in the meantime schools / parishes have to take responsibility. Please take a look at my uploaded file for more detail on these.

We need to be a simpler, humbler and less clerical Church. Return to the gospels and focus on Jesus. We also need to be less obsessed about rules and more engaged with the reality of people's lives. We are an incarnational Church, yet often we aren't listening to the concerns of people. The Church needs to review its position on divorce, contraception, and homosexuality—Jesus said very little about these issues and yet our leaders seem to be obsessed with them. It is not a matter of giving in to the culture, but developing a new hermeneutic that brings faith together with science and the real life of people.

For deeper experiencing of the felt presence of God through ongoing interior conversion. Deeper contemplative understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ.

Think of the impact you are potentially making on others and the world before you act or speak—don't put yourself and your own selfish wants first.

God is asking us to:

-Be Jesus' spirit to ALL people and include ALL people;

-Meet the needs of the people;

-Respond appropriately to injury and pain, especially in the light of George Pell conviction;

-Modernise;

-Change our rigid views on—vocations; sexuality and hierarchy;

-Revamp the structure of the Church, to reflect equality of gender, status and finances.

1. Church to stand firm in the face of increasing secularism. (Proverbs 3: 5-6.) 2. Change the sign of peace to before the presentation of gifts in the Mass so it doesn't interrupt the sacredness of the Consecration. (2 Tim 1-7.) 3. More discernment before we speak to each other. Use kind words. (Col 3:8) 4. Not be judgemental but prayerful to those who are suffering. 5. Remove the beam from your own eye before removing the splinter from your brother's eye. Judging others before hearing their story or knowing their circumstances. (Luke 6:39) 6. More education of the scriptures. E.g. Bible studies; St Ignatius way of praying. 7. Honouring Celibacy of the priesthood. Praying more for priestly vocation. No women priests. (St John Vianney.) 8. The man is the priest, prophet and king of the home. Should be faithful to his wife and if all can honour the Christian structure of home as God intended there would be less brokenness in the home. (Proverbs 30:5. 31:10-12.) 9. Protect the free speech and freedom of those practicing Catholic Religion. 10. Put in place screening and education of Catholic school teachers who are preparing school children with the truths and teachings of the Catholic Church.

In the words of Micah "to live justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God". Where injustice and inequality is evident, whether in Church or in society, whether at the local, national or international level, good people need to listen and to observe, question the causes of injustice, and seek remedial action. Love distinguishes authentic human living. This is most evident in the treatment of the disadvantaged, the oppressed, and those subject to discrimination—the elderly, the disabled, those who are "different", refugees and asylum seekers, Indigenous people, the poor, the marginalised. Love also involves care for the environment in which we must all live, leading to a heightened awareness and action on climate change, global warming, pollution reduction in the air and water, and on land. This can lead to unchecked capitalism, with a focus on personal, corporate and national economic growth at the expense of the environment and vulnerable population. Walking humbly highlights the greater good over the profit and advancement of individuals and vested interests. Walking humbly ensures that we know our rightful place in the order of things, that we acknowledge life has been given to us by no effort on our part, and that we can appreciate this gift in how we live our days, and how we ensure others can also live to their potential till the time when "unto dust we shall all return".

To be firm and consistent with the teaching of the Church, particularly in regards to essential truths about marriage, gender, the dignity of human life and the importance of the family structure. Especially in the face of strong, opposing public opinion that does not take kindly to sin being named for what it is and the effect it has on individuals and society as a whole.

The Church in this country is clearly under attack. The secularist and vehemently anti-religion (and often, specifically anti-Catholic) forces have their prongs sharpened. Much of this attack is framed as a "civil" war—with so-called "liberal", "enlightened" Catholics seeming to speak the sense and tolerance the World thinks the "old" or "conservative" Church is grievously lacking. This is a fallacy. These ideologues abuse the term Catholic for their own gain. The teaching of Christ (and therefore the Church) is immovable and without error. Be wary, even when perusing submissions

to forum such as this, about the views of "Catholics". The Devil is a master of deceit. His ways are equal parts odious and insidious. The greatest harm to the Church, recent history informs, is likely to come from within Her. Those who wield power within the Church (both with and without clerical collar) need to spend great amounts of time in earnest prayer and fasting. The task before you is a great one. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is not an insurmountable one. Without Him, you will be doomed for destruction. Remember you answer not to the Masses (either within or without the Church), nor to the hierarchy, either locally or in Rome. Your Judge resides in Heaven. I am a 35-year old medical sub-specialist with a young family. As a demographic, the World would presume that I am successful, open-minded, and of the opinion that the Church is in great need of change. Insofar as the last charge is concerned—they would be correct. But the "change" that is needed, I humbly submit, is a return to orthodoxy. Not of the Latin Mass, carrying the Pope on a throne through the streets of Rome variety but rather a steadfast defence of the Gospel. An unshakeable belief in, and courage to proclaim, the teaching of the Magisterium and Sacred Tradition, regardless of who the audience is. The prayers of a great many are with, and for, you.

To preach the Gospel as though we believe it, and to evangelise as though our nation depends on it.

I think God is asking us to go back to the basic building blocks of Christianity. The Church needs to have genuinely met Jesus in an intimate way and experienced His Love and desire to bring others to Him. Without a Church that has experienced the love, grace and mercy of (and had a relationship with) Jesus, all our efforts/endeavours will be in vain/lip service. Evangelisation within the Church and then outside of it is key. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and the Alpha course are fantastic at introducing us (young and old) to the person of Jesus. The Church needs to have pastoral systems that are innovative and sustainable in the future. We need to provide opportunities for people to experience the Holy Spirit, find their gifts, support the development of those gifts and place those people in positions that utilise their gifts and talents.

To listen and pray for discernment, wisdom and patience with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church as we all battle Satan's forces here on earth. No one human is strong enough to battle alone so we must gather as never before to encircle each other's spiritual lives and protect the community of earthly saints in our Church. As the Church struggles with dwindling numbers of clergy, congregation and zealots willing to defend the faith, we must change our approach to all things Catholic. Not so much as to no longer being able to call ourselves Catholic, or to be labelled by the outside world as running from our faith, but to wage a war of strength and solidarity so as to show the true meaning of God's plan for Australian Catholics and this diverse country which, though we are blest in our diversity, makes the task of evangelization to Catholicism all that much more difficult because we are not considered a "Catholic Country". I feel we need to change the relationships between parishes, family groups, welfare organisations and more widely the local community to promote constant open and frank dialogue to ensure the future trustworthiness of the Church in everyday living. Doing what we have always done will result in the Catholic Church getting what it has always got.

God is asking us to stay true to our Catholic beliefs and traditions. To name a few: Celibate Male priests, no to abortion, no to same-sex marriage, to maintain the seal of confession, no to

divorcees receiving communion. I also believe that God would like to see a return to more traditional celebrations such as the Latin Mass. I believe He also wishes for us to continue in our charity, education, medical and all other good works of the Church. Maybe we should look to countries like Poland to see why they have had such an upsurge in Catholicism and then to countries like Ireland to see why they have basically abandoned the Church. I also believe that God wishes for us to not feel ashamed of our Faith as there are plenty of other groups and organisations that are happy to do that for us. We should be humbly and quietly proud of our Faith and the amazing works that we do but we should also keep telling the great stories. We are getting to a stage where people will go to a Catholic hospital and be surprised at how respectful, empathic, professional and skilled the staff are, instead of just expecting this to be the case. We must be true to ourselves and demand that others take us for who we are and not bend to what they wish us to be. More young people will migrate to something that is firm in their own beliefs rather than trying to appease others to get the numbers in and/or be politically correct.

Having been educated in the Catholic school system predominately in the 1960s I am part of the cohort of age 60+ people that attend Mass weekly. This is practically the only age cohort that does attend Mass and of course in ever declining numbers in most Churches in metropolitan [-]. I wonder why that is so. I would like to think most of us would attend regardless of the fact that we are likely to be the last group to have instilled into us by the nuns and Christian brothers that failure to attend Mass weekly would result in mortal sin. Communion could not be taken until one went to Confession etc. etc. I wonder to what extent that this indoctrination still drives us at least subconsciously? In any event I'm sure that the eternal damnation message is not taught in Catholic schools these days. My observation is that many younger Catholics believe that occasional Mass attendance and receiving Communion will suffice. I raise this issue because I believe that many people must be confused about the Church's expectations in this regard. It would seem that Christ taught about love for one another and morals and behaviours that supported God's expectations but the Church over the centuries has introduced and sometimes changed the "rules". I believe that clarification is needed and that "rules" should be minimised and applied only where essential. An example is the contraceptive pill. I'm sure many Catholics do not consider using it as doing anything wrong. This brings me to suggest that the Church really needs to think about how it can send a message to people about how Christ's teachings can provide answers and support for people facing an ever complicated, demanding and complex society. In the context of the Mass, I believe that the scriptures and gospels while providing an everlasting message do not get effectively translated into contemporary society. Some priests do it well, but a lot still deliver lengthy 1950/60s style sermons. Which brings me to my final point that consideration should be given to the involvement of the laity in the Church. Coupled with this is consideration of the potential for married and female priests. If approved, this would enhance the overall numbers of priests and ensure that the parish priest can deliver a sermon that incorporates an understanding of Australian culture.

We think that God is asking us to focus on promoting the value of sacramental marriage in the Church, to promote marriage as an ideal sacrament for men and women in relationships and to explain that marriage is good and a building block for strong families and a strong community which in turn leads to a strong Church.

I believe God is saying ask for the grace to be in full relationship with me, in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. I believe he is asking us to let go of the arrogance and power that has seeped into the Church. Let go of the medieval practices and garments and attitudes without letting go of the essence of love and biblical and rich teachings of the Church. Modernise and use music and gathering that is for this century not unrelatable ritual. We must move into the market place and reach the modern generations not be compromising but by delivering an authentic Christian message, as Saint John Paul II put it using 'new methods.' We need to evangelise this generation with the living of genuine, humble gospel principles, Catholic social teaching and a balance of male and female participation in the Church. The male shepherds have done untold damage down through the ages, it MUST stop. Listen to the Holy Spirit and stop restricting the power of the Spirit by human judgement, we do so at our peril. Be attentive to the Spirit of God through contemplative relationship with God, in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and ask for the loving guidance of our Mother. God is with us every day guiding but those in power, use their power in the most devastating corrupt ways. We need to face this and stop these practices NOW. Be the Church that Christ called us to be. Live the gospel and humbly repent when we fall as individuals and as a Church.

God is asking us in Australia at this time to give leadership in coming to grips with the Vatican II vision of Church :

- to change the governance of the Church at diocesan and parish level;
- to advocate to change the MINISTERIAL structures "that are anachronistic and inadequate for its (the Church's) mission and purpose (See attachment 1);
- to take concrete actions to restore the credibility after the sexual abuse scandals and cover-ups in the Church as exposed by the Royal Commission (See attachment 2); "As Massimo Faggioli suggested in a recent article published by La Croix International: It is not simply a question of dealing with a criminal phenomenon. It is also a theological question: from the theology of the sacraments (especially ordination to the priesthood) to ecclesiological models; from the role of women in the Church to last century's magisterium on sexual morality. "The most complicated issue concerns the structural reforms required to address the mystique surrounding the priesthood and the episcopate, which are often still seen as positions of honor without the responsibilities that derive from holy orders. The sexual abuse crisis is just the latest and very dramatic stage in the ongoing implosion of a Roman Church that continues to stubbornly cling to governing and ministerial structures that are anachronistic and inadequate to its mission and purpose." From Robert Mickens, Rome March 1 2019

To be committed to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ based on compassion, faith, hope and charity. People being made feel welcomed to the Church. Meet and greet at the door.

Dialogue, Lay leadership, Relationship with Jesus ,Evangelisation, Connect Groups.

I believe God is asking us to encourage and overtly provide opportunities for all, especially for young people, to participate and feel at home in a vibrant community that promulgates the truth, adheres to Gospel values and to focus to develop liturgies (music, worship, altar severing, incense, guided Masses). To guide the sacramental program for parents and more activities in parish to

engage the people. To bring Jesus into the Catholic schools by teaching about Jesus, the Church (should have a Mass every week at Catholic schools).

To spread the word of God in Australia, to invite everyone to our faith. Help our communities as much as we can, giving our time and service. Help the people in needs. To be kind, happy, loving and grateful. To Evangelize Australia. To have school teachers in our Catholic school that live the Catholic faith. Promote the encounter con Jesus at early age in our primary schools at children levels and to stop introducing yoga before that to our little ones. Zero tolerance with any type of abuses. Return to the announcement of the Kerygma.

I think God is asking of us in Australia is: that the Church strongly defends and lives up to its existing traditions, sacraments and beliefs and thus be an anchor and beacon of light amidst the swirling tumult that surrounds us in this modern era of egocentricity and the liberal, visible, perverse sexual mores including CSA that corrupt our society; continues to improve Church processes for the protection of children and vulnerable adults; not ordain women to the priesthood, but perhaps allow them in the role of deacons; continue to speak up against the current and pervading 'culture of death' i.e. abortion, euthanasia; better promotes its services, works and achievements.

To keep our eyes fixed firmly on Christ, his message, values, and actions. To keep our hearts resolutely focused on the person and priorities of Jesus as demonstrated by his earthly ministry. To be instruments of charity, compassion, justice, mercy, healing and practical action. To imitate Christ's humility and leadership by service and self-forgetting sacrifice for the good of others. To be a less ostentatious Church and a humbler and more earthy sign of Christ's loving presence. To put people before procedures. To be about humility, simplicity and inter-connection (communion) and less about privilege, separation, aloofness. To form and strengthen leadership that is in touch with ordinary people and relates to them as people of equal dignity. To ensure leaders who have pastoral care first and foremost and are filled with compassion, but also leaders who are not naive to the real possibility and extent of sin and wrongdoing in and outside of the Church. Christ came to save us from our sinfulness, it remains a reality that we must always be wary of. Become more clearly a Church that proclaims Christ in ACTION, e.g. responding to homelessness, poverty, hurt. As the scriptures say, "no longer slave, nor free, neither woman nor man." That the Church will more clearly show in its structures and daily activity the reality of "no longer woman and man" and show this by more leadership and positions and involvement in decision making by women and men. That small local communities be recognised as the hearth of the Church (whilst ensuring communion with the universal Church) and that strategies are implemented to ensure the viability of the smaller communities with lay leadership, pastoral directors, deacons etc. Move beyond focusing on parish-centred organisational structures that leadership back up and support the more regional models to prevent individual parishes or priests just remaining isolated and unsupportive of the wider picture. To ensure Eucharist/ communion remains central to the life of parishes and communities the Church may need to change the rule that communion services cannot be in a Church if Eucharist is in a 'nearby location' as this does not recognise the important and coherence of the local gathered community. Whilst recognising Sunday as the preeminent day, in order to support local communities, the idea that the "Sunday obligation" can be fulfilled and promoted as being fulfilled by a "Saturday morning Mass in a particular community" or even

another weekday, to allow that community to participate in Eucharist with their priest. That is, not be too slavish to the letter of the rules when the spirit of the principle can be fulfilled. Look into whether anointing of the sick could possibly be a sacrament delegated to deacons/ lay leaders, for the good of effective presence of the Church, like as when a bishop can delegate a priest to do confirmations when unable, whilst acknowledging bishop as still the ordinary minister.

Asking us to look after our environment and each other. To live as a community instead of thriving as individuals. I think God is also asking us to be more tolerant of one another, especially of those from different religions and cultures. God is asking us to teach our children to do the same. God wants us to spread the good news but not through scripture alone. So much of the sacred texts in the Bible do NOT relate to our modern day world and because of that, is pushing people away from religion and God. How is it all relevant to this day and age?? God wants to be there for teenage children, but teenagers need something to believe in! Something real! Not just the Bible which states so many things that modern day youth don't agree with. They believe science... they need leaders to explain how and why they need God in their lives. How can God be of service to them? And vice versa? What is their calling? What does God want for these young people? They have been taught to take the Bible literally so now they don't believe the exaggerated stories therefore don't believe in God. How can we change their minds? It is difficult to ask youth to have faith when perhaps in their lives they haven't yet experienced God. I believe God is to be experienced. The wonder and power of God is to be felt and experienced. What is the image of God?

Atonement for dreadful failures via ministry to the poor or uncatered for (homeless; hungry; women fleeing domestic violence; drug addicts detoxing; grandparents needing respite from looking after grandkids because parents are absent/addicted; lonely elderly coping with a fast paced world). In each diocese this could partly be funded by perhaps rationalising and selling some Mass centres which are no longer as frequented. It's a cost, yes, but the public mood probably demands that we make some sacrifices to redeem ourselves.

God is not asking anything new, but what He has always asked of us: "This is my Son, the Beloved—listen to Him." We have not been listening to Him, but have gone our own way. It is time to return. The Church has to become more Christ-like, not just staying in the comfort of the past but going out to preach and teach the people. Being open and compassionate to those who have been excluded but also not afraid to proclaim the truth of Christ's message to our world. The present Church has done neither and so lost credibility. In practical terms, the Church must do as Christ did, and prepare for the future by teaching and giving more genuine (not token) responsibility to its loyal, educated and experienced lay members, especially in country parishes with no resident priest. Like Christ, it must be aware of the various gifts that different members have to offer and enable them to take on appropriate roles in the parish. Like Christ, the Church must respond generously to the special needs of married couples, who are the basis of every community, by ensuring that each parish is able to adequately prepare, guide, support and nourish every marriage in its community. Like Christ, the Church must first seek to serve married couples, rather than to be served by them (in providing children, donations, etc.). And like Christ, the Church must reach and embrace the young people in each parish, not by pandering to them, but by showing them the virtue and strength of a generous life that is lived as Christ did. At the

heart of Christ's life was His prayerful devotion to His Father, which the Church must continue to reflect in its liturgical prayer, with the focus of our worship being on God rather than ourselves. Only when the Church's liturgy truly conforms to Christ's prayer in being a humble self-giving and complete submission to the Holy Spirit, will the Church have the grace to change and move forward. From the devotion of a life-giving liturgy will come new vocations to the priesthood and to religious life, which is the life-blood of the Church. Finally, the bishops (being the successors of the Apostles) should acknowledge if they too have claimed a privilege position but then failed Christ (in the least of His flock) in His hour of need—as we all have at some time. This act of humility would give some much needed credibility to the Church in these difficult times (as did the 'Sorry' admission by the government), and possibly enable some people who left in disgust, to return again to their Church. I don't expect much of this to be read,—even less to be acted on— but I submit it with the belief that the Holy Spirit still acts in the Church, and we continue to pray for our bishops to be open to that Spirit.

We have an opportunity to review the Australian Church from top to bottom—our structure, practices, and actions and get back to grassroots Christianity! Many of the current Church hierarchy have lost touch with the people at parish level. There needs to be change right from the top, if we are to continue as an Australian Church. Young people need to be encouraged and welcomed to bring fresh ideas and for us older Catholics need to be open in our thinking to review and embrace this change, after all, they are the Church of the future. Our Church needs to move from the hierarchical links to Rome and be independent as the Australian Catholic Church.

(PLEASE SEE MY MORE DETAILED UPLOADED RESPONSE.) I think that the Church is being called to change its celibate, clerical, male leadership and ministerial model and lay women and men included at the highest level. Further, clericalism, in all its forms, must be addressed. Liturgy must be more relevant and engaging for contemporary Australians. Firstly, the language of liturgy must be addressed. The "new translation" is alienating people is a stumbling block for evangelisation because people cannot connect with liturgy. A liturgical focus on children and families must be prioritised. If we can engage and "keep" children, we can keep the family connected. Preaching must be opened to suitable lay women and men. The Church must follow Jesus' lead more closely and pastorally and sacramentally accept LGBT people, divorced and separated and those in "irregular" marriages.

Whatsoever you do.... have you been HOSPITABLE ENOUGH AND HAVE BROKEN FROM YOUR INDIVIDUALISTIC ATTITUDE / CULTURE? Do you see and treat your brother/sister migrant as your sibling in Christ and also a member of MY FAMILY? When will the hierarchy behave what Jesus would do if approached in unexpected places by the vulnerable and laity? Why do you confine yourselves to the Church and hall? Have you opened your home to a migrant the way you would open your heart to your fellow Caucasians? Have you broken from your self-absorption that your way is the only way, yet not God's way. When are you going to break from your white supremacy attitude, arrogance and deepen your humility? How come most priests and professors are not charismatic? How come the term charismatic and spiritual gifts I gave you for free are misunderstood and not practiced to the maximum? How come there is skepticism and resistance by priests, professors and many laities of the CCR? When are you going to be experts fishers of men? When are you going to break from the propensity to the secular culture? When are you

going to die to yourself for ME? When are you going to have the thirst for MY WORD? When are you going to draw strength from ME not from the material world or from others?

GOD IS ASKING US TO BE / TO: God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil to exist. Enchiridion of Augustine, Ch 2 (c. 420) Faith, Hope and Love, LOVE—When are you going to understand My Words in your thoughts and speak out from your hearts? At the gates of Heaven, we are judged by the LOVE we shared not by the number of good works we had done. St Chrysostom (?). COMPASSION to the disadvantaged among yourselves not just to those outside the flock. Have you practiced the GOLDEN RULE enough? HUMILITY—The foundation of all other virtues. Almost the whole of Christian teaching is humility. With a glad acceptance of weaknesses and dependence on Jesus in order to be saved. St Augustine. Humility is preeminent, it removes pride. Humility is the beginning of Christian virtue. St Thomas Aquinas. Humility has a religious provenance. It is the gateway to a life of holiness, the front and centre in the moral life. Proper humility promotes modesty and egalitarian spirit not endangering the proper pride and ambition essential to worldly success. AVOID BEING BEING LUKEWARM. COMPLACENCY is a deadly sin. God does not like complacency. So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. NIV Rev 3:16. WHO ARE WE? “KNOW THYSELF” quoted by Plato. How do you understand human beings, others, if you do not have understanding of thyself? And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. Luke 4:23, KJV WHY HAVE YOU NOT DEVELOPED THE GIFT OF MY COUNSEL? WHY HAVE YOU NOT LEARNED TO REBUKE OF TRANSGRESSIONS AGAINST ME? SEARCH YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH—Finding God in surprising 5 places for spiritual growth. <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-Catholic-faith/ignatian-spirituality/finding-God-in-all-things/five-surprising-places-to-find-God> at work in difficult relationships in our failings in loneliness in pleasure. RECOMMENDATIONS: To include in homilies the above contents. Campaign on re-activating the passion for first Friday Masses to the Sacred Heart and its 12 promises nationwide.

God is calling us as Catholic persons to show the people signs of faith: • To love one another as Christ loved us. • To forgive. • Not to judge. • To put God before money. • To be able, with the help of God, to show that the resurrection is real, in the suffering, like: Marriage crisis, sickness, old age, mental health problems, etc. This can be fulfilled in small communities of people who love one another as Christ loved us, in a way of continuous conversion. To create these communities we need to open the Church to the inspiration of the holy Spirit which is acting (example in the Emmanuel Covenant, the Renewal of the Spirit, the Neocatechumenal way, Couples for Christ, etc.). The parish must become a community of communities.

For Lay people to come forward and move the Church. For young people to become involved and inform the Church what is relevant for them.

The laity (by definition the laity are not the "uninitiated" in the Church—They are the Church) has to learn and be allowed access to more of what is happening in our Church both in Australia and in Rome. To understand how to bring/grow our Church in Australia by being inclusive and voicing our concerns to the Hierarchical Church and showing our Christianity to all in our everyday lives, therefore giving all people exposure to what the Church is and is trying to achieve.

The biggest problem is the disappointment in those that the lay people looked up to clerics and have now found that some did not deserve that honour either by sexual abuse or by covering it up. It also must be disheartening to priests who have not strayed but are looked on with suspicion by the general public. Positive, bold action must be taken to repair the damage to those that were abused. The Church needs stop holding back on reparation and show true contrition.

God is asking us to listen and observe the example of his son Jesus the Christ. Christ the Son is our gift, from God, and we have turned his Church into an institution that does not always lead with the heart of Christ. In many ways this institution can appear as a vehicle bigger than the message of Christ and that is dangerous ground. The Church talks the talk, but does not always walk the walk. To truly evangelise, the Church needs to encourage and help people to find and develop a personal relationship with God that helps them to navigate their individual path in life. The Church is full of rules and regulations that dictate to people rather than encourage people to develop their personal relationship with God. Most children that are educated in Catholic schools don't return as regular Church goers and that is because the Church fails to help them find a way to cultivate and maintain a relationship with God independent of the school environment. The Church needs to be a bridge that helps people to come to know God, father, son and spirit. I think God is also asking the Church in Australia to right the wrongs it has been guilty of hiding and enabling. Pay victims of sexual abuse by Church members the compensation recommended by the royal commission and stop trying to water amounts down in cases where penetration didn't take place. Really? Is this what Jesus would do? Get out of protectionist mode and get into treating these victims with the heart of Christ.

Love, unity and a cessation of revolutionary changes in our Catholic religion.

The Church by definition is 99% Laity and 1% Clergy. Therefore why do the Laity not have ONE seat at Plenary Council 2020? I assume the Laity needn't have a seat at the last one 70+ years ago and look where that took the Catholic Church!!!

To care more for others and not so much for self. To focus on kindness and compassion. My overriding concern is the image the Vatican portrays—get rid of the pomp, the paraphernalia and all those old men parading in gowns! My husband is a convert and finds it all very distasteful, as do I. What would Jesus think of the Church in Rome if he came to earth today? Does he need all that external showmanship? Other denominations do not need this vulgar display of wealth. Indeed, why do we need Cardinals, bishops etc.? When other denominations survive without it? Bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation! Clergy lament the drop in people attending the sacrament of Reconciliation yet when the Third Rite was available people attended in great numbers. Isn't there a message there? I can't leave this site without high praise for our own parish priest. He is a humble, dedicated, gentle and loving man whose standing is diminished by the actions of some other clergy. We do not need an Archbishop who actually came to our Church and preached that we the laity, should focus less on worldly goods and material objects as he himself stood at the lectern clutching his mitre and robed in all his glory. He was blind to his own message and obviously could not see the incongruity of it. And demanding to be called 'Your Grace'! Give women a greater say in Rome! Those women who spoke recently at the Pope's convention brought compassion to the whole sexual abuse debate. I don't think men in general, have that compassion and the Vatican (if we must have it) needs to heed women who are

mothers to be heard. I love my Church but am not impressed by the hierarchy. So I will continue to practise my faith in my local community and appreciate all the efforts of those good Catholics who do so much to better the lives of others. Celibacy? Why? And why was it first instituted? Priestly numbers might be retained if this rule was abolished. Good men are lost to the Church because of this.

My story, that I will share in the later question gives context to what I am about to say. There are four things (I am sure there are many, many others) that I believe God would ask of the Church in Australia at this time. These are:

- That we must rebuild trust with all Australian people for the Church to survive.
- That there is a need to learn to hold space for and with people, with compassion.
- Mandatory reporting is more than just a legal obligation.
- Don't let anger dishearten you, let it motivate you I will elaborate on these points in a separate attachment.

God is asking us to Pray and Reflect on Our Faith which is an integral part of Our Community in a variety of ways, Spiritually, Psychologically and Physically. The Evangelisation of the Catholic Faith—His Church, is a continuing Challenge in all facets of our current society which can only be addressed through a Renewal and Restructure of the Church from the Role of the Pope in the Vatican, the College of Cardinals, Archbishops, bishops and Ordained priest's as well as the various Religious Orders and The Laity. Unfortunately the Vatican "The Holy See" has had a disappointing performance since Vatican II. It has hesitated, procrastinated, and added ambiguity, in its understanding of the changing landscape in our Society. This "lack of performance " in being Accountable for all its Statements, not only in Communicating the Interpretation of the Holy Bible and Gospel but also Defending its Rulings on a regular basis through all possible media makes it vulnerable to Criticism and loss of Credibility. The Casualty in this process is the lack of Credibility and Trust resulting in the most vulnerable in the Community, including Ordained Ministers and members of Religious Orders being subjected to various levels of Abuse. This lack of Constructive Leadership from the Vatican has had a devastating effect on the Catholic Community. The Entire Catholic System requires a "Root and Branch" Audit by appropriately qualified Auditors to ensure there is transparency in internal investigations and appointments, full disclosure as well as reporting of all Financial Matters as per accepted International Accounting Standards, a regular rotation of the Pope and College of Cardinals restricting them to a maximum term of office and a maximum age limit. The creation of a manual of Operations for the Vatican which includes a flow chart for career advancement for all Ordained priests in global communities. A failure of compliance in any of these areas should result in severe penalties such as loss of status as a religion and charity. I think it's time as Australians we show some leadership and encourage as well pray for the Plenary Council to have the Inspiration, Courage, as well as Spiritually guidance to offer some practical solutions to the Vatican for consideration. We should pray to God including saying the Rosary to Jesus Christ and Mother Mary to guide us Spiritually and give us the character as well as strength to walk in the shoes of Jesus showing compassion and tolerance. Jesus—"What you do to the least of you, you do to me."

To spread His message more forthrightly to counteract the evil influence of materialism in our society, promulgated by huge sections of the press and tolerated in our Catholic schools.

I believe God is calling on the Catholic Church in Australia to be united as a witness to the Christian teachings expressed in the Gospels. At this time, the Australian Church is in need of shepherds who are prepared to care for and lead their flock closer to God, not to allow their flock to be lured away by secular trends on issues such as same-sex marriage and abortion. While the issue of clericalism certainly needs to be addressed and the laity need to play a bigger role in the Church, this should not mean that the Church opens itself up to pressure from divergent groups within, seeking to water down its teachings. The sexual abuse crisis is a wake-up call for increased openness and accountability in the Church, which has been sadly lacking. The Church must end its secrecy and put the care of its faithful (especially the young and vulnerable) above those in leadership positions.

To focus more on the issue of abortion and the responding culture of life that the Church should take a new and fresh look at. There are approximately 100,000 abortions each year and the Church has been relatively quiet on this matter, with little said from the pulpit. This is an extremely high number—this is more than all the combined deaths from cancer, car crashes, etc. The inability to respond in an active and loving manner has allowed our laws in Queensland (Termination of Pregnancy Act) to worsen this situation. Evil thrives when good people do nothing (or very little). 40 Days for Life Brisbane is about peaceful and prayerful vigil to end abortion. It is both simple yet extraordinarily powerful. Our vigil and our organisation should be totally supported by the Catholic Church. Archbishop [-] is our Patron and has given his time by providing a letter of support, meetings and a YouTube message. However, we need the priests and congregations to follow his leadership in this endeavour.

1. I feel married priests, women priests and short term priesthood of say 3 to 5 years before an individual returns to lay life should be options in the Church. 2. I believe we should look at introducing different Mass and prayer formats. A shorter Mass option or a meditative Mass or a musical Mass are options that would attract different people. A new or shorter format can be deeply meaningful and prayerful without being long. Maybe introduce a Mass based around receiving communion then a short prayer or music. We cannot be glued to one format of worship if we want to stay relevant to young people. 3. Invest large amounts of money into active regular youth groups. This may require paid coordinators across parishes but it is vital to engage young people. 4. Reconsider Catholic schools role. Why are they becoming a de facto state school with fewer Catholics. Maybe schools should be smaller and more Catholic rather than diluting Catholic identity by watering down its purpose through mass enrolments. 5. Reread what religious education in schools should be. I feel it should be vibrant, active and based on doing. It should not be based on worksheets and tests. Faith is lived. Do children need an A to E mark for religion?

Be there for those who feel isolated, the homeless, the refugee, the abused; allow priests to marry, also allow women to become priest; pray for the youth of today who lost their way into drugs and crime; for the mothers to pay more attention to the needs of their children and to be more responsible parents; hold fast to traditions; more emphasis must be given to receive Jesus in the Eucharist in a state of grace; actively call for those who do not attend Mass back to the

supreme sacrifice; increase our hope, faith and charity, to be more united in prayer/action, work for God's greater glory; love each other, learn to develop ourselves, go to give what we are given.

I think that God is asking specifically of the Catholic Church in Australia that it become more grounded in Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God. To become such a biblically grounded Church, every person, from lay people to bishops, need daily engagement with scripture, through both study and prayer. Jesus' vision is diametrically opposed to any kind of clericalism, either in the ordained or in the laity. As the Royal commission said over and over, such clericalism has been a major cause of the power abuse that leads to child sexual abuse. Therefore, I believe that, since God is asking the Church to return to the vision of its founder, a major concern of the Plenary Council should be to vigorously promote both the study of scripture and the daily prayerful engagement with Scripture by all the baptised. Any hoped-for renewal will only be effective if grounded on this level of conversion.

To re-focus Catholic education on teaching Catholic faith as opposed to secularism, and to reinforce our faith's absolute value. To champion the sanctity of life. To focus on developing a community of faith and its central role in our lives, and to supporting others in their faith so that people don't feel isolated when practicing or speaking out on their Catholic faith.

To focus on and witness to those things that our faith tells us are indivisible right and indivisibly wrong—specifically to champion however possibly the sanctity of life. To show solidarity with the universal Catholic Church—that is, the Church throughout the world and not to focus simply on issues that may seem important here in Australia but which may be minor by comparison to those affecting our fellow Catholics in other parts of the world.

More assistance for priests. They have far too many responsibilities, with help they can focus more on spiritual matters. Priests should be allowed to marry. They have a tough job and it would be helpful to have a partner to share life with. Each diocese should have a small body of Church members that can oversight and ensure we have honesty and transparency. The Church will have to get a tremendous amount of help from parishioners to overcome the current abuse issues. All seminaries should teach new priests (and current ones for that matter) that the Catholic Church does not have a monopoly on God.

To love Him by keeping His Commandments, as He asked us to do.

To be outward looking particularly engaging with the broader community and other Christian Churches in spreading the Christian message. When using a generic prayer of the faithful, these need to be reviewed in the light of current needs and events. Full use of our parish bulletin and diocesan press to keep people fully informed of current items of interest and discussion.
Governance of the Church: broader representation of the universal Church in its governing bodies.

We, the Church need to stand for something and not just fall for any new wave, fashion or media driven culture. We, the bishops and priests we need to teach and keep God's Commandments. The modern Church often acts and teaches as if these Commandments have been repealed. We must choose to follow the teachings and behaviours modelled by Our Lord Jesus Christ and clearly stated in the Gospels and Epistles. The Church has too great a reluctance to declare openly and boldly the truths of the Catholic faith in all its fullness and glory. The bishops and we should not

allow ourselves be cowed into gun-shy silence about God's truths by continuous rabid and unfair attacks and generalizations by the media. The Church and its sacraments and the struggle for personal sanctity are people's primary means of achieving salvation and eternal happiness in heaven versus remaining opposed to God's will and condemning oneself to the eternity terrible reality of the punishment of hell. Despite the key teaching task of priests and bishops to profess the true faith without error and preserve God's people from eternal loss, it's hard to remember when heaven and hell, the reality of sin and its consequences and active preparation and reception of the sacraments were last addressed by a priest from the pulpit. Similarly, by ignoring the Church's teaching on marriage, there seems to be a willingness to overlook adultery, cohabitation and active homosexual relations and mention of them is avoided. There is no sense of sin. We need to recognize the fine balance between God's mercy and God's justice. We are being urged to accept people "where they are" and to "travel with them". However we must not put out a false compassion masked as something good and caring while not respecting the objective truth of various situations i.e. we cannot give the impression to someone in mortal sin that their sin is okay because our own love is all that matters. This is incorrect, false and potentially damaging to people's eternal salvation. In our present context we can't morally be fellow travellers with or ignorers of sodomists, abortionists and those involved in euthanasia. This sort of weakness has left us unprepared for and recently overwhelmed by well prepared, financed, publicised and energetic sodomy and abortion campaigns by purveyors of evil (euthanasia next). God needn't ask us about improving the greatly decayed faith formation and moral fibre of children graduating from our schools. I rarely observe them attending Mass, the summit of our faith, after making their First Communion which seems to be their vehicle of entry to a safer better managed school environment. It doesn't have much impact now on morality/salvation. They like the sort of "polish" to their manner and appearance. What about their parents? Well, they need reconverting too: old enough to have gone through the same system and think, like Bishop Barron, that "all men are saved and Hell is virtually empty."

When you look at Jesus and his disciples and read about how he was together with his disciples, it is very difficult to reconcile those images with our Church hierarchy of today. He exuded humility, servitude, simplicity, he was poor, he was on the ground amongst his people every day fully showing the face of compassion, care, and love for his people. You don't see this or I've never seen this in our Church hierarchy today—the pope, the cardinals, the bishops and priests (apart from those on the ground in 3rd world countries). I don't mean to be harsh, but it's true. I would love to see the pope and the cardinals serving and sitting in the Vatican's soup kitchen if it still exists—why not? Jesus would have. I recently watched 'National Geographic's overview inside the Vatican. And yes, whilst we all admire the beauty and history of it all and how it came to be what it is today, it truly is difficult to reconcile the images of extravagance with the gospel of Jesus. Humility- we as Catholics need to see the humility, love and compassion not coming just from us the people of the Church, but from our Church hierarchy also. The Church needs to come back to its grass roots, and the people need to feel and see that happening from our Church on earth's leaders to build up confidence, respect, and trust again.

Sunday services that are so engaging that all types/ages want to attend. Uplifting music that parishioners can engage in rather than songs selected that even the choir can't sing. Allow new

ideas to be discussed and tried—music, artists, actors, etc. rather than ruled by unseen people from the Archdiocese. Homilies by the best preacher not necessarily the priest ('longer is not better'—getting the Word across in an effective way is the aim). Change the Church to reduce clericalism—re-introduce optional celibacy and married priests (even women priests). This will reduce one of the key factors in sexual abuse. Change the Church to allow much greater participation of lay people and women in all roles at the local level, and stop male priests and bishops thinking that they have all the power—we need real engagement of lay people in Church management. Priests and bishops need to give up a little to gain a lot. Establish a more synodal participation of the people—set up structures and practises that regularly and genuinely seek the people's views and act on them. A greater drive and focus on community engagement so that no one is left behind. A greater drive and focus on mercy ministries that reach out to the lost, sick, needy in our communities. Set the example by selling some of the mansions and palaces that the Church hierarchy live and work in, and use the money for the needy. Select the best practices from across the board of Christian Churches and move towards a combined Christian Church—we need to be humble and accept that we don't know everything and may be missing out on better ways. More children's programs and youth ministries—if we don't there won't be any future. Better explain to parishioners that the Bible is not historical fact but written by people to achieve an aim for their time—if our parishioners aren't given regular explanations of the context of the words then they won't be able to fully gain from the readings. Ensure that our celibate priests are supported by/with community, mentors and counsellors—don't leave them on their own in lonely presbyteries. Allow the existing words in the Mass to forgive a repentant person of their actions/thoughts and get rid of reconciliation (it is just a controlling and guilt mechanism)—have the one service a year for forgiveness 3rd Rite—this is what people want—to reflect privately and be given general absolution. Extend an apology to all women who have been traumatised over the years by being denied communion because they were divorced or an unmarried mother. Remember—"tradition is the greatest barrier to progress' and 'If you keep doing the same thing and think that you are going to get a different result, it is a sign of madness'

How to change the Catholic Education System to promote the Catholic faith in our schools. Go back to teaching catechism in schools.

Better treatment of the Gay community—Often times we have found that the Church treats those who are gay or lesbian with contempt and without acceptance. Their sexual behaviours are often considered 'unnatural' which does little to welcome these people into the Church. More lay people to be involved in the liturgy—The priests are often expected to give life advice to families, youth, working people and much more, however, these priests more often than not are either: completely out of touch with these issues OR have never experienced these issues. By allowing lay people to be more involved with the liturgy (such as speaking and creating the Sermon) the Church would be more relatable and more effective at spreading the message of Jesus' love. Contraception after marriage—Currently Church teaching says contraception after marriage is not allowed, yet almost all married couples use this practice to stop having more children (rather than the far less reliable method of natural family planning).

That the Church welcome and encourage full participation of unordained Catholics to all levels e.g. ordained women and married men; disenfranchised people e.g. LGBT and divorced people to be

welcomed at the table of the Lord. That the hierarchy have another look at the intentions of Vatican II with the view to deciding if they are appropriate to Catholics of Australia in the 21st Century. With this in mind I think God is asking us all to move forward, after all, it is 2,000 plus years since Jesus' birth, death and resurrection which formed the basis of Christianity and sustained our faith. God is asking us to find ways to reach out to the younger generations and make changes, where necessary and possible, to give them a reason to reconnect with God, Jesus and the Church. Teachers and Chaplains should be very much involved. After all, our younger generations have been taught to be rational, critical thinkers and no longer believe what they are told to believe as we did. God is asking the Church to modernise the rules and regulations, where appropriate to e.g. to bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation. Attendance of the 3rd rite in the company of my fellow parishioners gave me a greater sense of forgiveness than confessing to an individual priest as I was blest by God, the celebrant and the congregation with whom I prayed on a weekly basis. The laity, and women in particular, to be more involved in all levels of the Church.

Defend the Catholic Church during the Pell and clergy/nun abuse shame. To keep the faith. To talk up the Catholic Church. To look hard at what we are doing as a Church, and turn the other cheek to those who are persecuting all of us for the sins (which we don't condone) of a few.

To love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. To follow the examples that Jesus gave as regards living in society, respecting all of creation. To demonstrate gospel values in our own time via responsible stewardship of nature and constant striving peace, equality and social justice worldwide. The institutional Church needs to be proactive in the following areas:

- recognising the role of women and involving them at all levels.
- more actively working to assist the homeless, refugees and the socially disadvantaged.
- involvement in ventures that are inclusive, promote social cohesion and understanding and generally strengthen the fabric of society.
- read and understand the signs of our times, and work proactively to enhance the positive and counteract the negative aspects of change.
- re-evaluate and update Church structures and the training of future priests and religious. While I realise that positive changes have already been made at the level of individual seminaries in various countries, more needs to be done. For example, celibacy should be optional, ex-priests should be welcomed back to ministry, married men should be allowed to enter training. Current single celibate priests should be given better social support. I would like to see the Church invest financially in Social Enterprises (refer book by Muhammad Yunus, "A World of 3 Zeros").

Catholic Church to be more inclusive e.g. divorced people and those who have married out of the Church made to feel welcome. That the rule of celibacy for priests to be deleted. More emphasis on God's rule not manmade rules. Openness and the elimination of sweeping under the mat any problems e.g.: child abuse, bullying etc. More school liturgies and expecting a commitment of parents towards the faith if they want their child to attend a Catholic school. Most importantly to find a way to encourage lapsed Catholics back to the Church. That lay people have more of a say, because it is us who are the Church.

1. Formation for all Catholics. Being a seminarian it is easy to see the quality formation that priests and to a lesser degree religious receive, which is absolutely necessary as servant leaders in the Church. However, I also believe formation of various sorts needs to be promoted among the laity too. I have grown and benefited myself as a Catholic, partly thanks to the formation I have received in a discernment house in [-] called [-] House, as well as through formation opportunities the diocese has opened up to laity. Formation: Human formation as foundational, Spiritual formation, Missionary/ Disciple formation, as well as intellectual to a lesser degree. I believe society in the past was functioning in such a way, that it was able to build the basic 'humanity of people', but I believe, in general, society today is in such a state that it cannot and is failing to form decent people even on the basic human level, which is why I think the responsibility is now on the Church to form its members and thus build a functional society once again.

2. I believe the Holy Spirit is asking the Church to turn its gaze to Mission. And in order to achieve this, as touched on above, the Church needs to form Catholics as Missionary Disciples. We need to come out of ourselves and out of our tomb like Church; we need to go out.

3. I feel the Holy Spirit is asking for the call to holiness to be more and more emphasised to the laity, as St John Paul II and many others have prophetically spoken to our millennia. I believe the laity are not aware of this deep and simple reality mainly because, it simply needs to be promoted more, in order for a sleepy Church to wake up and realise. Holiness is not reserved for a weird, lucky and superhuman few we call 'Saints' but for every person, particularly if they call themselves a Christian or better yet a Catholic.

4. Finally, I believe the Holy Spirit is asking the Church of Australia to invoke His spouse, the mother of God, Mary. It sounds so simple and yet it would seem the simple things are the ones often over looked. This should not just be left up to the laity in private prayer, but the shepherds of the flock should also be feeding the faithful 'publically', with renewed ardour and devotion to the mother, especially through the Rosary. Paradoxically in my experience, it has been clergy and religious who I have witnessed stifle this devotion. Far from trying to be sentimental or militant I believe the Spirit is asking us to be receptive and to humbly receive the mother who has been sent by the father, given over by the son and empowered by the Spirit to help us on this difficult journey as a Church.

God is asking us in Australia to pull ourselves away from society, to be bold and stand up against the immoralities of the world.

1. There is a need for people to encounter Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and be converted to Jesus Christ. 2. We need unity in the Church in order to move forward. This doesn't mean uniformity, but we need unity in our diversity. We cannot move forward if the Church is divided. 3. Change is necessary. We need a new way to 'do Church', to be Church. We need to be aware of where the Spirit is moving and follow, not being stuck in 'the way it was done in the past' or 'what I assume is the right way forward'. 4. The priesthood needs renewal. Seminarians and priests need to be taught about encounter with the Holy Spirit, for personal renewal in their faith, and training in the Proclamation of the Gospel.

Go back to the values of the Catholic faith—Mass in reverence, confession, upholding of the commandments, recognition that a lot of things in our society are sinful. Be brave and stand up for the Catholic Faith, speak out against sins like gender mainstreaming, abortion, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage. Do not try to make the Church fit the Australian lifestyle, try to make your lifestyle according to the Church.

1. To support our genuine, embattled priests and bishops by removing clericalism from the Catholic Church. Structure needs to be dominated by elected laity with religious concentrating on pastoral care and God's love. 2. Immediately open the priesthood, bishop, cardinal positions to married priests, Deacons, former priests, and particularly Women. 3. Notify the pope this is URGENT and cannot wait until the end of the council. 4. Temporarily suspend from parish and schools any religious accused of interfering sexually with minors and report to police for investigation; this includes confessions. They can be reinstated if cleared. 5. Stop making rules for what women do with their bodies, including contraception. Move into the present with family planning for wanted and loved children. Important for the poor and poor countries. 6. WATCH Q&A Monday 4 March 2019 which reflects how many Catholics want clericalism changed and are having faith severely tested. Ensure the pope sees a copy of the program. 7. Stop preaching sex as being only for procreation when God gave it to us as a beautiful gift between "couples" ideally in marriage. Accept gay and other biologically different persons fully into the love of God, expressed on earth here in the Church. 8. Don't hide behind man-made Canon Law but ask for urgent change from the Pope now. If change does not come from the Vatican, then some of it MUST be ignored to bring about urgent change at least in Australia. You can lead the way! The Spirit working through the laity will support you. 9. Get permission now for laity to be at least 50% (at least half women) of the Plenary Council. If not forthcoming make the bold decision now or else you will have no credibility in the diminishing flock. 10. Encourage and provide alternative liturgies, celebrations, gathering to attract and be spiritually meaningful to the young. Such opportunities to experience God will generally lead to a more spiritual experience, ultimately in the Eucharist.

God is asking us to: Clear up misconceptions about God in mainstream society. Promote, more often, the good works that Church does. Always have competent representatives of the Church in mainstream television programs—preferably Catholics who have a very solid faith, who exude the incredible love and joy of Christ in their lives. Encourage more involvement of the laity in decision making. For woman to be able to make important decisions in the Church, not just an advisory role, but the ability to actually make decisions. For a more democratic model of decision-making. Rather than one person making every decision based on advice, the people giving advice should be able to actually make the decision.

I am writing this on behalf of a parishioner ([-]) who asked me recently how the big conference was going. He then started discussing various issues. I am sharing this particular thought. He said young people are no longer interested in being nuns or brothers. They do not want to live in convents or communities. However they still have the vocation to give themselves in service to children. He asked, "Why can't we train these young people as teachers with the special role of teaching religion in Catholic schools? They would be a specialist teacher like a music teacher or a physical education teacher. They would be trained teachers with a specific curriculum and have

set times for class lessons. They may also be able to assist with special liturgies, sacramental programs. Just as with other specialist teachers they could be shared by small schools.”

Window dressing is another way of covering up an issue. [-]’s in exile. Here things were done different did it really matter. They were reaching out to the poor and what would Jesus have done? Diocese of [-] bishop made comment. Result we all know. What would Jesus have done? We have to change to survive, life goes on and we have to learn from the past, live in the present and hope for the future. We may not like this but this is being real. Our parents had to cope with change and we have survived. With prayer and only prayer can help us now. When Jesus had a problem what did he do? He went away and prayed. The priesthood should be open to single and married men. Deacons should be able to be single or married, God’s call could be when we least expect it at any age. Women should be represented in all decisions that are made regarding our Church. We are the Church made up of male and female. We should be at all levels of administrations. Following discussion it should be the best person for the position be it not gender based. There are brilliant people out there; let us use their God given talents. When you look at the recent gathering in Rome. What is missing? Equality of our race. There is no balance. This is a great crisis time for our Church. We need to stand up to Rome. Our belief in God is strong. Jesus showed us the way.

Student responses are attached as additional material however the general themes of their responses were as follows:-

To be truly accepting of all people regardless of gender, sexuality, race or culture and not be hypocritical.

To embrace equality.

#To be forgiving people.

#To care for the environment.

#To be loving people and help those in need.

For the Church to be more inviting and provide more opportunities for teenagers to be involved.

To live in our time—applying God's word to contemporary times.

To be more open with historical problems of the Church and not hide when the Church falls short of community expectations.

That Holy Mass is celebrated in a proper and reverent manner. Recently, the celebration of Holy Mass has sadly become, at [-], [-], more like a 'Hillsong' event. The Order of Mass should be followed by all celebrants. A recent unfortunate example, even at [-] in [-], is the failure by the celebrant to say the Preparation of the Offerings audibly and denying those present to respond. They are significant and beautiful prayers and do not take long to say. Perhaps the organist or guitarist should stop performing when the gifts are handed to the celebrant!

God is continually calling us to holiness: everything this Plenary Council should consider must be, however difficult, centred on the ever-new call to holiness that permeates the Mission of the Church. The Church in Australia must retain a fundamental focus on the sacramental life at its core. It must promote and increase access to confession and adoration, as well as restore and

promote Holy Days. The Church in Australia must promote a rediscovery of the beauty of the Church that has been passed from the Apostles to now including: its liturgy and its music traditions—including importantly Gregorian Chant.

We are asked to promote and defend the faith, so that we may grow in virtue and achieve salvation.

Belief in the real God. Develop a spiritual and loving relationship with Jesus. Re-establish the status of the priesthood as the humble servant of God to the people. Encourage vocations to religious life for both men and women. Publically proclaim our faith, to set out a way of life that and a purpose in life that goes beyond the materialism and hedonism of our current society. Each year the Australian bishops issue a public statement about some current matter; make these more frequent and address the most controversial matters that separates Catholic doctrine from popular culture; the paper on marriage at the time of the same sex marriage debate is an example except that (in my opinion) it did not address strongly enough the negative effects on society of same sex marriage. Lead the Australian people back to a Christian culture by sharing publicly what we believe and practise and establishing the reasons for our belief and practice and the benefits to society as a whole. Too often journalists and others are calling themselves. Catholic publicly denigrate some aspect of Church teaching such as sex before marriage, contraception, abortion, euthanasia, divorce, remarriage of divorcees, reception of communion by divorcees and others living in irregular unions, female priests etc. etc. This gives a public misunderstanding of what the Church teaches; a group of dedicated experts is needed to provide corrections. Professing Catholics are now a small minority in the Australian population. There may be a large "Catholic" presence in society in the form of Churches, schools, hospitals and other visible structures but these are really historical, they represent the past Catholic population and their enthusiasm for good works. The schools and hospitals are staffed largely by non-Catholics or non-practising Catholics. As a minority we need to take a humble approach to evangelising the remainder of the population. We need to re-learn what the Mass is and why we go to Mass. In this regard, I believe that the clergy have much to do in teaching us to value the Mass.

We all people of God have confessed that the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. However, many people have been discouraged by the diluted identity of the Church, especially "Holiness". Whenever the articles and news over Child Sexual Abuse committed by Catholics, people outside the Church seems to consider that the Church is not holy anymore. Nevertheless, the Church is holy since it was founded by Christ who is holiness itself. As the Church has a lot of people who are weak, it is impossible for us to perceive that the Church is perfectly holy. However, it is our mission to restore holiness in the Church. "How does the Church maintain and restore the holiness of God?"

1. To foster in each individual within the Church an ongoing, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is an internal rock that can weather any storm. A socialised version of Catholicism will not weather the storms such as the Royal Commission and the stories of abuse that have come from it. 2. Evangelisation—a Church that recognises the gift that it has in Jesus Christ and cultivates a language and culture that opens its doors, desiring to share this gift with the world—person to person, one by one. Catholics in general treat faith as private and this is one reason why we are struggling to engage the next generation and our peers with our faith. Do we truly

recognise the gift we have been given through our faith? Are we attempting to create a culture of evangelisation where all Catholics learn how to share their faith with others? 3. Improve our leadership and governance structures—basic principles of group dynamics make it clear that diversity in leadership and governance structures is essential for these structures to govern and lead effectively. Additional issues include accountability, transparency, expertise and knowledge. 4. Embrace succession planning and strategic planning—we are an ageing Church with an ageing institution. Is it any wonder that youth ministry is seen as something that's necessary—but not necessarily a serious agenda or a part of the more serious conversations? We need to tackle the hard questions—if our priest numbers are declining we need to be considering what changes God might be asking of us to weather this into the future. But the priests are only one area in which we are not good at embracing succession planning. This covers a multitude of areas including decent wages for all Church staff, upskilling of Church volunteers and employees, investment in the personal development and growth of individuals within the Church. 5. Build a culture that celebrates and embraces our diversity—unity in diversity. Conservative or liberal is old school terminology that young people couldn't care less about until someone from an older generation passes on their grievances. Let's not cultivate this culture. It is not a question of only one way. There are many ways of expressing our Catholic faith and we need to stop the infighting and start recognising the richness that we have to offer. As long as each expression is authentic and draws the community closer to Christ and to the Church, we should be encouraging the diversity. 6. Try new things. Embrace a culture of R&D across Church agencies and organisations. The Church has been lagging behind for too long. We were once the trendsetters of society—at the forefront of art, scientific discovery, etc. Try new things, debrief, reflect and learn from them. How can we change our internal culture within the Church so that we are discovering new ways of being Church in the world today? 7. Improve our pastoral care—let's become a Church known for our compassion with truth.

Catholic schools to be the source of a new beginning for the Catholic Church allowing congregations to be fully responsible of the management and ongoing direction. Hiring only Catholic staff with solid principles.

To lead by example, to love and respect one another, to be truthful. To protect the vulnerable and uphold the Catholic values.

The Church needs to get back to basics. It is in my experience that the vast majority of Catholics today practicing or not, do not know the fundamental basics of Catholic doctrine. One of the causes of this is an example of my Catholic schooling where basic Catholic Catechetical teaching was non-existent and heterodox ideas such as the non-existence of hell was openly taught etc. in many of our religion and ethics classes in high school. People do not understand the importance The Eucharist. Teachings on how the Eucharist ties into the Old testament etc. One of our biggest issues in short is we do not teach the faith and many of those in charge of teaching for example religious teachers and APREs in Catholic schools generally hold heterodox views or are non-practicing Catholics or Christian's themselves. An idea would be to create a new order of sisters and brothers whose mission is to teach in Catholic schools. The spirit wants us not to be afraid of his teaching. We have his true teaching and we should be proud and boldly preach it and not go with the will of the world. The Church by its very nature is counter-cultural and we need to accept

that. In short most Catholics don't know the reasons behind traditions such as unmarried priests, why women can't be priests, why the divorced and civilly remarried should not receive Communion. If priests would teach on these topics from the catechism without fear these questions wouldn't become a topic to talk about nor in the many listening sessions I have be present in.

To be a compassionate, trustworthy, transparent, caring-for-others body of people, giving witness to the radical spirituality of Jesus of Nazareth, To leave behind all out-dated beliefs, doctrines, structures, practices that betray the basic revelations / message of Jesus, To move beyond the age-old negative emphasis on "we are all sinners in need of redemption" to the deeper message of Jesus' life: Everyone is 'born of the Spirit of Love and is a beloved son or daughter of our loving Creator God. This is our basic human dignity, belonging to ALL, whether we come to know Jesus or not. Accept the fact that 'the Law was given us through Moses; Grace and Truth have come to us through Jesus the Christ. And the Grace and Truth of Jesus set us free. In the Spirit we can recognise our tendency to sin, our sometimes 'falling short of the mark', but claim and live out of the energy of the Spirit to live a good life. Following GS 22 (and other Statements), cancel forever the 'necessity of baptism for Salvation"... and doctrine of Original Sin. Lead the world in abandoning the inequality / unworthiness / inability of women myths and resultant oppression. Accept persons for who they are (beloved of God) wherever they may be on the sexuality spectrum... and equal opportunity for ALL. Accept the historical developments of the sacraments / assess what might be truly necessary for today's human beings / and leave behind all unnecessary baggage. (e.g. the myth of Jesus' ordaining the apostles at the Last Supper). Jesus didn't intend to 'start a Church".

Return to the graced time of Third-Rite Penitential Services. Move beyond the myth of the Spirit coming upon the 12 apostles at Pentecost to a truer interpretation of those events as revealed in Acts 1 and 2. There were about 120 believers gathered together, united with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.....the Spirit filled the whole house....etc. etc. Move beyond the 'perpetual virginity' of Mary to the fairly obvious fact that Mary and Joseph had other children, including James, the 'brother of the Lord' and first leader of the Jerusalem disciples. Why are we afraid to accept that Jesus, WAS truly, fully a man, member of a very earthy human family, subject to the vicissitudes of his times, including death by Crucifixion, if you dare to challenge the status quo and religious norms of the time? In the face of our current Sexual Abuse crisis, and all the humiliation that comes from it, can we SHOW AUSTRALIA and THE WORLD a truly humble, transparent, simplified 'Church'—free of all the showiness that comes with special vestments, over-done ceremonies, structures of superiority /inferiority', including over-done bowing-down, scraping, calling-out before a God' image who isn't always reflecting the tender mercy / compassion that Jesus revealed. "What I want is mercy, not sacrifice".

How will the Church make Mass and texts more engaging and age appropriate for young people? The practices embedded within the rituals and rites of the Church are often irrelevant to those in the assembly. We need to help all people of God opportunity to encounter the divine through the affective domain. The Church is about showing tolerance and acceptance of the marginalised and the Indigenous. The importance of teaching young people about sexuality and openness around this.

Most problems do not apply just to Australia but to the Church worldwide so my comments must be read in that context. Get rid of all aspects of clericalism including fancy dress and titles. This should start at the very top. How can one take seriously a group of men, supposedly intelligent and in positions of authority, getting all dressed up in ridiculous outfits, at enormous and unnecessary cost and parading themselves as medieval princes and then discussing serious modern problems in a dead language (Latin) which many of them probably don't fully understand? In this day and age, responsible worldwide organisations make use of modern facilities like simultaneous translation services. The Church must include women at all levels, including priesthood. Priesthood should not be restricted to celebrate males. It is quite ridiculous that in Australia we should be importing priests from second and third world countries when there are probably more than enough married men and women available, eager and willing to serve the Church in leadership roles, including priesthood. It is also irresponsible to lure men from these overseas countries where their services are probably more desperately needed. In Australia, we should be making very serious efforts to go back and not only re-implement the reforms of Vatican II but also see how these can be further developed into the future. Basically what is needed is an effort to bring the Church and its teachings into the modern world, making sure that things are logical and take account of modern scientific knowledge. For a start, the whole concept of original sin needs to be re-explored. The notion of a "fall" and God punishing all mankind for it simply cannot be sustained in the light of modern knowledge. Without this, there is not a need for redemption and virtually all Catholic doctrine and liturgy starts to fall apart. Jesus' life and teaching could be made more meaningful without sacrifice and redemption dominating everything. The idea of a vengeful God demanding the suffering and death of Jesus as expiation is totally primitive and cannot possibly be equated with a loving God. The Church needs to put compassion at the front of all discussion and decision making, as Jesus showed in his life. If this is done, so many problems fade away, like how divorced people are treated or how gay and lesbian people are treated. There needs to be more love and less condemnation. With a focus on compassion and love and a proper regard for poor and disadvantaged people, problems like how to overcome the stigma of the sexual abuse scandal simply fall away. The Australian Church needs to take the question of Christian unity seriously. Being the one and only "true Church" is not sustainable. Individual's choice must be respected as also their traditions. Modern biblical scholarship across all faiths must be properly considered. The concept of "the inerrant word of God" and Bible literalism rejected.

A banding together, a solidarity in times of darkness and trouble. Our Church in Australia is very spread out. A lot of this is to do with the vastness of our country however so many other things are spread so thinly. Resources, priests, youth ministers, lay ministers, people working in charity. There is a feeling of hopelessness and drain at times when it's the same handful of people doing the same things over and over because "they are the only ones here". I believe this isolation leads to disillusion and that is the start of the darkness and trouble. Without community to support, nurture and call each other to holiness, people act and react in the only ways they know and sometimes that falls out of line with the mission and vision of the Church. I think the Pope's call to "go out to the sheep" is what is being asked of the Church in Australia as well. This means that there needs to be a push of the re-set button to make sure that everyone is on board. It cannot be assumed that everyone who works in and for the Church has a shared vision for the evangelistic

mission call of Pope Francis. For example, I am a teacher in a Catholic school and from what I've gathered, part of a group of 3-4 out of 40 that are regularly involved in a parish or faith community. For me, this is the mission ground. This is a group of people—Catholic school teachers—of whom it is often assumed that are automatically on board with the Church's mission. They often aren't. This is an ideal place of re-set and shake-up. There is so much goodness happening in the Church in Australia but because people and resources are spread so thinly, these things often go unnoticed by the broader Catholic-identifying Church.

God as always expects commitment to Him and being more Christ like. Showing our Christianity through Actions and not empty words.

I think the answer is that we know what God is asking of us because it is in the scripture and the Creed but what we don't know is what it looks like in 21st century Australia. There are many times where Christ exhorts us not to be hypocrites, but to be united and to have a genuine love for everyone. Australia has always been a protestant nation by that I mean that there is a profound confusion as to what is Church and who is Christ. There is a deep-seated rebellion against the Magisterium even if it is the truth. People seem to want to be led from behind or at least led in a humble way. This requires teaching and explanation even negotiation to enlighten the day to day issues that plague us in everyday life. People are attracted to authenticity and a humble integrity of a life lived in Faith, Hope and most importantly Love. I'm not speaking of the clergy here and the nuns but of every day Catholics in everyday situations or as the gospel puts it more eloquently to be the salt, light and leaven. Australia is a young and pioneering nation by that I mean people have had to "Make Do" in the tough times and our heroes are the battlers who "get on with it" despite the difficulties of life and our "droughts and flooding rains". Many nations also admire this kind of stoicism however when the mystery of the crucified Christ and the fact that each person's personal cross is in fact glorious and that's where the Love of God is made clear in each person's personal history that is a powerful witness that God is with us. When we can answer to the question "why is there evil in our lives" and not the world in general. When we can discern why the innocent suffer in our own lives and thus enlighten the lives of those around us it is then that we are apostolic. As Australians we highly value mate ship. However, while we can have a lifelong friend, that is nothing compared to the Communion that can be experienced between members of a community where our abilities or usefulness is not necessary or even when there are members that are annoying and yet there is a communion. When the faults in the other person help us to see our own faults that we are blind to. Again, the gospel puts it more eloquently "take the log out of your own eye before you take the splinter out of the eye of someone else". Then we will be one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. These broad "motherhood" or utopian statements can only be realized in people have been catechised and experiencing love and unity in a community. People who experience death and resurrection on a daily basis and do not feel like they are better than anyone else.

1. That Australia leads the Church in showing the world that things can be changed without losing our Faith ... showing the Way to a new World Vision filled with Joy and Hope ... through becoming more focussed on Jesus' own spirituality, and what he taught and lived. We need to believe in and live in the "kin-dom of God"... each of us is a beloved son or daughter of God, our basic human dignity, called to live in life-giving relationships with each other and the whole of Creation.

2. We will be aware of who we are as human beings today, our level of consciousness, and our place in the history of the Planet and the Universe ... and what the Christian Story has to offer to our confused, competitive, struggling, suffering, global society. 3. We will open ourselves up more and more to the presence of the Spirit within us and among us—and allow ourselves to be instruments of the Spirit, as Jesus himself was.

I think God is asking us to look anew. As a Church we look through the lens of the past, protecting what we do, because it's what we've always done. But I feel like God is saying to look anew and look ahead. To look at our society and our people not through the eyes of the Church (are they Christian?) but through the eyes of Christ, with mercy and love. Not to serve traditions because they've survived time but what is it those traditions were meant to shine. God's love, God's mercy, His forgiveness, hope, joy for His people. Empower those who have the heart, the passion and the gifts to serve and serve people in their space not our own. Making the service of families, homeless, migrants, ill, etc. our priority—not getting bums on pews on a Sunday. Creating community—having a place to make every person belong and feel at home and connected and doing so outside the Church buildings. God has made us all and gifted us all in unique ways, but how many people sit in those pews each week not using their gifts for the Church or God? If we were to give them space and encouragement to do so I think we would see people come alive in faith. Not only is there a place for you there is a need for you. I think God is calling all people, not just the ordained, to lead His Church. Yes, we are called through our baptism to serve and evangelise. But in real ways to lead the Church, men and women. Maybe it's not in the parish model we've known but in new formats—Church leader, Director of Mission ... and in places to lead the ordained. Why are we expecting these men to do all things even if they aren't gifted in it when there are capable and gifted people before them? In particular, when it comes to preaching. Creating space for a lay person to preach in the liturgy with worship that is uplifting and leads us with energy, faith and joy towards the Eucharist. To step forward we need to be ready and at peace to let go of what has been. People no longer walk to their Church and can often drive past half a dozen to get to their Church. We must ask and research if this model is what our society needs today (our society not our Church). And if it does need to change let's do so in a way that's uniting not damaging. Finally I think the Church needs to be and is called to be completely transparent from now on. It's such a part of our culture that things happen behind closed doors, in secret or just known to a small group from Reconciliation through to Conclave. But this secrecy permeates through all parts of our culture and as the Royal Commission brought to light it can be damaging and deceitful. I would love to see our Church live as though she lives in a glass house. Be honest about all things; where and why priests are moved, finances, publish meeting minutes. It might seem naïve to suggest but if we are wanting to hide something from 'the public' then it begs the question—why are we doing it?

I think charities such as Caritas, Centacare, Catholic Mission etc. need to stop sending repeated mail outs and phone calls for more money. As a donor it seems to be a waste of money that was donated for charitable works. There needs to be a broader consultation between the Archdiocese and parishes. Decisions are made without getting informed information of the financial impact on parishes. The Archdiocese needs to look at their head offices. These offices have the latest gadgets, furniture, coffee machines etc. whilst parish offices often struggle to buy the basics,

instead of coffee machines our parish has to wait until instant coffee is on special at the supermarket. Our staff are paid at the lower end of the spectrum because our parish can't afford to pay them more. Lay people need to be involved in decision making at the highest level.

To be more open to and accepting of all Christians in this country (and the world) by: re-examining the exclusivity of the Eucharist which excludes others who worship the same God from joining fully in shared worship; observing and learning from their experiences of different styles of worship and language; considering the value of their recognition of women as leaders and married men as ordained ministers of the Church.

Personal relationship with Jesus, Spiritual Renewal of the Church, Holy Spirit central to the Church, being still and listening to the voice of the Spirit, Spiritual Awakening, more opportunities to encounter the Holy Spirit in Mass, Charismatic Prayer Group in every parish, baptism in the Spirit for the whole Church, Renewal of Clergy, openness and unity with others, parish youth workers in every parish, reformation of the seminary, opportunities for healing prayer at Masses, priests and laity attend life in the Spirit Seminars, youth and children formation in schools and Churches, whole Church operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, reaching out to the lost and separated Catholics, unity between Churches, learning evangelisation and healing from other denominations, working towards a Christian country, for the Clergy to encourage and offer opportunities for all members to develop a personal relationship with Jesus and to manifest the gifts of the Spirit.

I think God is calling the Church in Australia to help people to grow in a personal, intimate relationship with God, and a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith. People need to know the faith to be able to value the significance of it in today's world, and share it with others. As St. Peter states we need to always have our answer ready for those who ask the reason for the faith we profess, and to share the beauty of our faith with society. One way to achieve this is to review our Catholic Education and faith formation programs in schools, universities and parish communities. We need to use more the resources of the Church in our programs, such as, Scripture studies, Prayer, history, traditions, Catechism, testimonies, Patristics, Church documents, saints, devotions and doctrines. Our schools need to teach Catholic truths to help the students to understand their faith, and allow it to impact their lives. Students need to be taught the value of prayer and have experiences of daily prayer. Also an in-depth study of the meaning, history, scriptural background, and value of the Eucharist, and discussions and formation on the Catechism. We need teachers of religion who are practicing Catholics who have a deep love of God and the Church, and sound understanding of our faith. Teenagers and young adults are searching for meaning in their lives and answers to the BIG questions, Jesus and our faith have answers that transform lives, but so many are not hearing it.

1. The courage to address the current burning issues as a whole Church—cleric and lay members together, and thus give credible witness to a loving and merciful God. 2. That we shed all that is extraneous to being the faithful followers of Jesus Christ and focus on the core Gospel values in our collective and personal lives. 3. That nourished by a strong Gospel spirituality we will together speak and live with conviction the richness of all our Catholic traditions and not limit our understanding to a narrowly defined and severely limiting theology and ecclesiology that has held us captive for the last few centuries. 4. That we as Church take leadership in the Australian

community for a process of Truth-Telling of both our "Church" truth and our Nation's historical truth as invited by the First Nations people at Uluru. 5. That our parish communities be nourished in all aspects of their lives by the supports we provide for ongoing learning, reflection, and engagement. And that this nourishment and support is extended to people from all cultures and backgrounds.

I think God is calling us to right praise. How do we praise and worship him. I feel like our liturgy has become self-confused and what I want mentality. We are being called back by God to right praise just as the Israelites were called back to right praise when they started praising a calf statue. The intentions were there but that's not how God wants it. The other important thing is to implement the teachings of Vatican II as it teaches, not as how we Interpret it.

I am sure that it will be included: but I would pray that the findings, recommendations and the spirit of the recent Royal Commission and the Cardinal Pell trial are seriously considered for discernment and formation. Also, the conversations of those involved in the Q&A program on The ABC TV on 4/3/2019 should definitely be principle elements of our ongoing journeys.

I hope God is asking for bishops and priests to be open and transparent in all aspects of their ministry. Key Performance Indicators assessed annually by peers and parishioners would be a good start. Embrace all of Vatican II. Be open to radical change. e.g. Married priests, Female ordination, Allow lay persons married or single to celebrate Eucharist in rural areas, Allow men who have "left the priest hood" to celebrate Eucharist in their own communities. Have qualified parish managers/administrator to run parishes so that priests can better perform pastoral duties.

I believe God is asking us to know, love and serve him by being faithful to the gospels. How we do things might change over time but the teaching of Jesus Christ does not because God's wisdom is for all time. We need to demonstrate our faith in God by attending Mass weekly and being a part of the faith community so we can draw strength from each other to demonstrate our faith in the wider community. We can't seek to change the gospel values just because some people find the message too difficult. We all find it difficult but prayer and fellowship always help.

Plenary Council Response by [-] What God is asking of us in Australia at this time is to be a Church and community of believers who are more: • Inclusive • Transparent and Accountable • Interconnected, Relevant and Hope-filled • Mystical, Contemplative and Wisely Active.

Inclusive:

- Lay women, men and religious in leadership of the Church. Quick, immediate appointment of acknowledged female and male lay leaders and/or members of religious congregations to be leaders in the Church. Change office bearers of significance to senior positions of the Church to capable and theologically adroit religious and laity to relieve the overwhelming burdens currently carried by the dwindling numbers of aging, ordained leaders.
- Acceptance of diverse believers who are currently marginalised in the reception of Holy Communion. Change in Canon Law to allow divorced and other currently marginalised Catholics to partake in Holy Communion. Change in Canon Law to allow believers from other Christian denominations to partake in Holy Communion. Open ears, hearts and minds of believers to be more attentive to the marginalised and underprivileged of diverse creeds and cultures. Improve

our capacity to listen with an open heart and with a desire to learn from the wisdom of others within and beyond our Church. Transparent and Accountable.

- True Reconciliation demands the enactment and follow-through of more effective accountability and review policies and processes for leaders of the Church In order to regain trust from the global community, some of whom have been shamefully abused by members of the Church, we must all be held more accountable for our own and part in destructive group behaviours and actions. More effective accountability policies and process that outline just and proper conduct and relationships with individuals and groups are to be formalised and made very public. This must be prioritised for all, particularly for the ordained members of the Church. As a Church personally and publicly enact the four stages of Reconciliation. This involves: 1. Admitting wrong doing especially to those who have been abused. 2. Saying sorry personally and publicly. 3. Genuinely seeking and acting out Penance (redress and significant accountability review and structural change). 4. Seek Forgiveness and Forgive. Once the Church publicly performs appropriate penance and upholds these into the future over time, trust will be regained, and true forgiveness and reconciliation celebrated. Align regular accountability and review processes for leaders of the Church with the best of those used in secular institutions and corporation. Such processes should be effective and robust so that they include commendations and critique. The latter should be accompanied with appropriate consequences and professional support to improve performance and human relationships attitudes and skills. Interconnected, Relevant and Hope-filled
- Search out ways to connect with the disaffected...

To live humbly, serve and support each other.

I think that God is asking us to think very deeply about the Catholic Church including the past, the present and the future.

We think Catholics in Australia need to be equipped with practical knowledge of how to dialogue with people with other beliefs, presenting the truth in an attractive way. The Christian faith has the power of Truth and Beauty that many people could benefit from. We need attractive Catholic witnesses in social media platforms, the entertainment industry, and in political life. People who defend life in a respectful yet courageous way. This also includes reaching out and the spreading out of communities. Not being content with our own Catholic groups, but opening channels of communication with a wider variety of people.

We think God is asking Catholics in Australia to know more about the perennial teachings of the Church. For this, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is a wonderful guide for the four main areas of our faith: Creed, sacraments, Commandments and Prayer. Even in Catholic schools, we observe that children do not learn enough about the sacraments and their importance throughout one's whole life. The sacraments need to be understood as more than just another "rite of passage" that is done at certain ages in children's life, but a regular means to access the grace we need to grow in our Christian life. As for the Commandments, it would be good for Catholics to learn it is not just antiquated rules of "thou shalt nots" but practical ways of living a truly, authentically Christian life. For this to happen, it must be presented with a positive outlook, applied to the

moral challenges we meet in our contemporary society. Pastors need to encourage Catholics not to be afraid of “standing out” from the crowd by being true to our moral convictions.

God is asking the Church to provide better preparation for marriage and ongoing accompaniment of families in their journey. First of all, young people need encouragement to take the decision to marry, with a deep conviction that it is possible to form a Christian family in our times despite social pressures. For that, there has to be a deeper anthropological understanding of the impact the family has in society as the base upon which citizens grow and develop. Also, we need a wider catechesis of Marriage as a sacrament where the grace of God has a primary role in helping the couple grow and endure the difficulties that come their way. Pastors can help through an insistence on fidelity based on the spiritual life of the couple and recourse to the sacrament of Confession and the Eucharist.

One of the main remarks made about the early Church was their fraternal love, “Look . . . how they love one another (for they themselves [pagans] hate one another); and how they are ready to die for each other (for they themselves are readier to kill each other).” (Tertullian. To the Gentiles). The Church in Australia needs to be more service orientated and Catholics need to learn that their identity as Christians does not stop at the temple but it should spread in their attitude of compassion and care for those around them.

We think the God is asking us to value once again the gift of the priesthood in the Church. We want to see our shepherds cultivating their own personal piety and fostering pious devotions in their parishes, like the Holy Rosary. We would also like to see them being prepared to spend hours in the Confessional passing on God’s mercy and providing the spiritual direction so much needed. When a priest is dedicated to his vocation, he can transmit the faith in a simple yet attractive manner.

We think God is asking of Catholics in Australia the authenticity of living their faith wherever they are. This means practicing Christian virtues both in the temple and at home; at work and during entertainment. By being exemplary in the workplace and honest professionals, Catholics reflect the Word of God and make Christianity attractive to others. Catholics should be known for speaking well of others, kindness, openness and compassion. Whilst being well grounded in our own religion and morals, we should reach an understanding of human weakness and show true compassion in desiring to bring others to the truth.

1. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20, 2. It is abundantly clear what God is asking of the Church in Australia—to be leaders of our faith community and society through the observance of God’s teachings through Jesus. It is our actions that will bring about change for good in the Church and society. We need to make our Church relevant, welcoming and attractive to people of all ages and nations as the first disciples did while not compromising the message of Jesus. 3. God is calling us to be more of a light on the hill. “No one lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket” Matthew 5: 14, 4. God is calling us—the Body of

Christ—to: • Become a more prayerful community, recognising God and wholly embracing the teachings of Jesus and be people of faith; • Show greater love, humility and compassion; a willingness to change and to engage with the general community through good works and ecumenical activities; • Be a welcoming people for all especially the young and youth, marginalised minor communities of our society, un-churched Catholics and others; • Show genuine and sincere forgiveness to those that have sinned and broken the rules of the Church e.g. through divorce; • Ask for forgiveness from those we have harmed. Need for Change. 5. “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its taste how can the saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything; but is thrown out and trampled underfoot”. Matthew 6: 13, 6. The Church’s place in society hinges around good governance and recently events such as Royal Commission have shown that good governance is lacking. It has been made clear from our parish meetings, from the wider community and media commentary that there are significant failings in the current system and change is needed for the Church to be recognised and function as a credible organisation in our society. 7. Members of our community noted that significant changes need to be made in all sectors of the Church and at all levels for our Church’s survival. Most importantly, we need to renew and reinvigorate our national leadership, archdiocese leadership and parish leadership.

I think he's asking us to be faithful to Him and his Church. We should also be developing a good understanding of our faith as a support for our faithfulness call. It seems to me that knowing our faith, knowing what we believe is one of the fundamental aspects of being faithful, especially in these trying times.

I think God is being replaced by a new religion of man and the Church will face more disgrace due to clergy who have lost the spirit of God, for a social worker, carer. God wants holiness, not a showcase for to look good.

To be caring of each other and to consider the rights and dignity of all individuals, while loving God and our neighbour.

To welcome the ‘other’, no matter how they fit into our prescribed teachings and rules. We are all sinners and we are all on a journey. Just because we know Jesus now, doesn’t mean we always did. It’s the same for the ‘other’—who knows when they may come to know Christ and when they do, how their life may change. We are just called to love them now and journey with them towards Him. It means that to be Catholic and part the Catholic community is not just for Sundays. It should be in every thought we make. We have for too long been consumed with our own little lives and forgotten Jesus’s second commandment: to love others as we love ourselves.

To be a Church that welcomes, includes those who are marginalised, people with a disability, refugees etc. To be transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of the community.

I write in the days after the Cardinal Pell conviction. All around me the small remnant of Catholic faithful are in shock, dis-empowered, confused and lacking much hope. Sadly I see a Church (and a society) that is so torn into 'camps'; a deep dualism exists. We pit 'us' against 'them', you are either in or out, right or wrong etc. This very dualism is at the basis of much of our environmental crisis but it is also at the heart of much which struggles and faces the Church. So—what do I believe God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Firstly for us to work hard at finding ways for

our people to actually 'experience' God / the sacred. When is the last time you or I met someone who experienced God in one of our churches or liturgies? So we are needing holiness (not piety); we are needing conversion—real and deep. Core to this I believe is for the Church to place much more emphasis on giving the faithful the skills of theological reflection so they can themselves 'read the signs of the times' and engage with their world. Not talk fests! Not black and white in and out thinking. I work a lot with youth. I talk about 'in points' to conversion or experience of God; nature, good ritual, story, justice, silence, service, community and more. Let us work more and more to help our faithful experience God and then equip them with the skills to reflect on that experience. This in itself will open the door to deeper encounter. We need deep rituals of healing and reconciliation—and to form yarning circles where people can share story; how they feel and what is happening to them. Let us place a lot more emphasis on adult education and a lot less emphasis on Catholic schools. Almost no-one is evangelised through a Catholic school. They are not bad places—it is just that we place upon them an expectation that they just can't meet. Many of our lay movements have given the Church much life; encourage them—Marriage encounter, Cursillo, Antioch etc. Allow the Spirit of God to truly speak. My elderly mother who died at 94 was a daily Mass goer until age 86. She often said to me, "I do not care whether the priest is woman or man, married or not—it is the Mass that matters!" Let's take that topic out of the 'too hard' basket. Let's work hard to ensure our clergy continue their formation after seminary; so few do. But most of all—lets 'fall in love' with our God over and over again and all of the things we think are 'issues' will fall away. We need to take our women seriously; and not some token response. Leadership or leadership regardless of gender. Let us courageously and deliberately invite our women into leadership in all aspects of Church life. But probably more than anything—we are tired Church—tired because we have not been listened to; because we have felt dis-empowered; listen, pray, fall in love, stay in love and do not be afraid. Sadly—so long after the Second Vatican Council we are still a priest centred Church; this must change!

I think God is asking us for total renewal in the Church and Church communities. Our Church has become paralysed with unhealthy clericalism, blatant hypocrisy and hateful prejudice against some of the vulnerable people in our society. The Church has become obsessed with its own importance and brand protection—the Church hasn't realised it is irrelevant to most people in Australian society. The sex abuse crisis and Pell's conviction illustrates the gravity of the crisis facing the Church. It is failure of leadership at all levels of the Church. I believe God is calling us to more democratic structures that acknowledge the thoughts and opinions of all. The Church needs to stop exercising discrimination, prejudice and hate to gay people. We are all created in God's image and have all been called by name. The ridiculous position of Australian Church leaders in promoting care for gay people but at the same time still denouncing and ridiculing the life and experience of gay people. Continues to hurt and alienate gay people. Archbishop [-] is master of this sanctioned prejudice. Church leaders have the power to change the whole paradigm and build a more just and inclusive community—instead bishops and priests continue to peddle hate. The young people of Australia just won't cop this anymore—they are leaving the Church in droves. The same-sex marriage referendum is further evidence—the spirit is calling Australians to an inclusive future where gay people stand with value and pride alongside other Australians. Young people are rejecting this hate and prejudice—they are choosing love! The Church just doesn't get it!

To get the message across to the tech savvy teenagers and young adults. The message delivery must be relevant to where these people are in life. If they are lost, the Church dies because they are the future and the Church must create an environment for them to satisfy their needs.

I believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to remember why we exist. We are called to experience and share the encounter with Jesus with renewed boldness and vigour. This is necessary for all, from those in the pews to those who are not. For me, this is our 'core business'. This means we need to reallocate resources to support the people, structures, organisations etc. within our Church that have this at the heart of their mission and action, and bear good fruit in sharing encounter with Jesus. In order for this to happen, governance structures need to be marked by greater collaboration and ownership by religious and lay, men and women, young and old alike. We need the gifts and expertise of a range of faithful to be all we can be.

To be an inclusive loving people, following in Jesus's footsteps.

I believe that we need to be more open to change. The times have changed and the Church has not kept up. Youth are disengaged with the Church it seems they think it is irrelevant. Some of the language used in Mass is so foreign to a lot of Australian local parish communities and people especially the young and women. Bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation that many, many people attended and participated in and now most of those same people no longer attend any rite of reconciliation. Decisions are made by priests and bishops ... it is a closed club. Look where that has got us. The Catholic Church is faltering under the weight of the abuse scandals. All abuse needs to be reported immediately ... not hidden and covered up. I don't know how The Church can ever recover from this horrible and disgraceful abuse of trust. So many people are hurting, angry and disillusioned. Priests and bishops are human ... eliminate clericalism. Lay men and women should be included in all discussions and decisions ... we are the Church. Celibacy should be voluntary and married men and women permitted to be ordained. Welcome back people who have been turned away or have felt abandoned because of divorce, leaving the priesthood and other disenfranchised people. As parish communities we need to be caring, sharing, welcoming and open to change. With the dire shortage of priests in the very near future ... Sunday Mass will have to give way to Communion services led by lay people. What other option is there? I don't believe foreign priests are the answer as language and cultural differences are a huge barrier to overcome.

I've put everything in my external submission because 500 words are not nearly enough for what I have to say.

Find His truth in your life as a Christian. Go to the Gospels and hear his message through the words his son spoke, and his actions that guide our lives. Love God and see him in the other, and show him in you to the other.

Summary on Plenary Council 2020— Listening and Dialogue Encounter Last Thursday and Saturday (21 & 23 February 2019), [-] Community, [-] came together for their two sessions of prayer, discernment and discussion to discuss Plenary Council 2020. The question that was asked of them was "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? God is asking us:

1) Looking at our life and the trend of our society. Do we know our mission to be alive here in Australia? And what have we done with it?

2) Renewing our faith in Him—Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and mature. Romans 12:2,

3) Go back to the Pentecostal time—Acts 2:38-47,

a. Repentance and forgiveness—'You must repent,' Peter answered ... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38,

b. Integrate life and faith to testify for Christ: Church goers generally lack awareness of the Bible, a weak sense of belonging to the Church, a lack of mastery of faith and prayer life, a lack of conditions to convey faith to their children, our faith are truly nurtured must be from home, in the neighbourhood, in our profession, and the whole training and upbringing. We need to have small group prayer meeting/gathering regularly among Church goers neighbourhood to stay connected. It is centred on the Bible, nurtured by prayer and sacraments, based on good interpersonal relationships and in the direction of more abundant life. Not only to share life, support each other, but also to examine the environment in which life is located, not only to reflect on faith, but also to seek to put faith into life,

c. Regular spiritual renewal program—retreats, seminars, conferences....etc.,

d. Laity leadership training program.

God is asking us to spend more time with Him in prayer, scripture learning, more involvement and participation in formed Church groups.

For more reverence before, during and after Mass allowing the congregation to prepare, pray and give thanks for receiving such a great gift as the Lord Himself. Reverence in the way they dress. For homilies to include the teachings of our faith so that the laity can understand and learn to accept these truths. No wishy-washy homilies that try to keep everyone happy and don't offend anyone but are not helpful in caring for souls. For the laity to become more missionary minded and understand their role to go and spread the gospel and to show the face of Jesus to all they meet, remembering that God is our Father and therefore we are all brothers and sisters and have a duty to care for the souls of those around us. To speak the Truth in love. For more formation of the laity so that they understand the truths of our Church, that they come to really understand what the Mass is all about, the importance of prayer in their lives and the importance of having a personal relationship with God. That they truly know that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. That priest show they too believe in the true presence of our Lord in showing reverence towards our Lord in the Eucharist. That priests preach on the universal call to holiness and what that actually means and how we as Church live this out. Formation, formation, formation for both priests and laity!! Formation programs offered and encouraged in parishes using programs by reputable Catholic scholars like Scott Hahn, Bishop Robert Barron, Dr Edward Sri.

- Open dialogue with ALL to promote a Church of invitation

- To refocus on the true message of faith and the people who have modelled this over time

- Identify and share the positive communities that promote and live by faith
- To be an active voice for the marginalised and disadvantaged
- Look for ways to include young families in prayer based communities
- Spread joy, hope and promise
- Review archaic structures and rules that push people away from their faith
- We are called to follow Christ in a hope filled way forward
- Use the Catholic social teachings as a common language to teach about the ministry of Jesus and what it means for us (love, compassion and respect)
- Increase the voice of women
- Create a Church for all people
- Lead by faith and wisdom
- To walk with the injured and vulnerable

I think what God is asking of us in Australia is to love more, to listen and to act. I think he is asking us to trust in Him and to lean not on our own understanding but to follow him. To get back to the basics of the Gospel, to know God, to love God, to know God is love and to make Him known.

I believe God wants us to be his hands and feet in the world; to love the unloved, to listen to those on the margins, to help the poor in our midst, to share the good news of the Gospel. I believe God wants us to be humble, to be a listening Church, to not seek the head seat at the table where we can impose our will upon others. I believe God wants us to be Church through our humble example, not by winning political favour. A Church that is poor and for the poor. I believe God wants us to be inclusive, and to let go of the bitterness of the older brother who will not come to the feast, or the grumpiness of the labourers who worked for an agreed rate but resented those who (in their eyes) received a better deal. Especially, we need to let go of the desire to say "Thank God I am not like other men, especially ...". We need to be a Church of Mercy, and a people who are humble because we have experienced Mercy, and want the same for others.

I believe God is asking us to get back to the roots of our faith tradition. By that I mean to follow humbly in the footsteps of Christ. To love, to embrace all, to live a joy filled life, to forgive and to spread the Word.

PRIESTS' Sacred Liturgy—STOP CHANGING THE WORDS. Mass must be celebrated with the due solemnity with which it has always been honoured. Priests must respect tradition in this way and avoid interpolating with their own gimmicks which are irreverent and unhelpful to the development of piety in the congregation. The Second Vatican Council made it absolutely clear priests must be obedient to the words of the liturgy as outlined in the document 'The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy'. In the third part of Article 22 it says: (3) Therefore no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority. Priests must take seriously the vow of Obedience. **STOP CHANGING / ADDING WORDS TO THE LITURGY.** Every Catholic has the right to hear the liturgy celebrated correctly. In many [-] churches

including St [-], the Words of the Mass are always changed. NOT ONE WORD SHOULD BE CHANGED. This is an extremely frustrating situation. I HAVE STOPPED PUTTING MONEY ON THE PLATE WHEN THIS HAPPENS. Tabernacles should be moved to the front of the Church and not tucked away at the side of the Church or in a separate room. The Tabernacle lamp should be on 24 hours a day. A Church on the northside of [-] turns off the Perpetual Tabernacle Lamp. Would the Archbishop of [-] please investigate this? Vocations to the priesthood and Religious Life will come from holy priests. Holy priests never change the words of the Mass. Obedience and holiness are inseparable. Lay Catholics will be inspired by holy priests to lead better lives. Saints such as The Cure of Ars, Blessed Solanus Casey, Saint Padre Pio, Saint John Paul the Great, and many more, showed the world what is achieved by holy priests. The example of the Saints should be promoted at all times. Priest shortage—We need more priests. We have no guarantee of daily Mass anymore. We used to have good priests from Nigeria and India. They have been sent back. Why? Married priests will not work because a priest's commitment is to his parishioners. If married, they would have to provide for their wife and children first. Holy Communion Kneelers should be provided for those who want to receive the Holy Eucharist kneeling and on their tongue. Priest should be taught not to be afraid to put the Host on the tongue. In the past, Holy Communion was always received on the tongue. Many people today want to receive Holy Communion on the tongue. This is a sign of reverence and great respect for God. Priests who openly show reluctance to put the Host on a tongue need help to understand lay Catholics have a right to receive Holy Communion on the tongue. Children preparing for Holy Communion should be taught the correct way and then make up their own minds if they want to follow the correct way.

To be more open and understanding of the differences in our world. Make a more conscious effort to break down stereotypes about our faith. Promote a stronger faith amongst people. Learning about the Church's teachings and its history. Encourage and support the youth of our Church more. Advocate for unity. Be more involved in raising awareness about issues that indirectly affect the Church i.e. climate change, mental health etc. To come together and unite in order to become a stronger Catholic community. To introduce more people into our community. To embrace the Christian lifestyle. To grow the community of the Church. To all be one. To all love each other. To let go of our dark past and to move forward and to understand each other. God wants us to be lively and to praise and preach His holy name. To get other people to believe in God too. Every time we leave Mass, finish praying etc., God wants us to feel whole, true and pure. He asks us to pray when we are grateful, and to pray when we are sad, angry or unsettled. He asks us to remember He is always there for us. To be united when life gets hard or if we so blessed. To have faith, to preach and praise Him. To accept everyone, no matter what. Focus and strengthen thy faith (by always seeking God's love). Schools -> do more to spread the Word of God. Participate at Church more? To have the youth actively participate more in the Church. To encourage those around us to be nicer to one another. To be a community where all are welcome. To use our gifts and talents for the benefit of the world. To invite God into our lives. To evangelise. To show our faith through our actions, rather than words. To fit our lives around religion, not religion around our lives. Example: making time to pray every day instead of praying when we have time. Not when it's convenient, pray in the morning as soon as you wake up. Talk to God during the day, ask for guidance. Not only attending Sunday Mass but also adoration and benediction, reconciliation

etc. Bring more people into the religion. Spread His word and in doing so carry out His mission. To not only help ourselves to have a better relationship with God but to help others to create or improve their relationship with Him. That the status of women in the Church is equally displayed and represented. Where females are empowered to lead and promote the Good Word. To get more young people to be part of our Church. That we allow the Holy Spirit to work inside of us so that he can work through us. We help other countries that aren't as developed as Australia is. Helping the inter...

To be the (best) possible disciple to those around me and to help inspire people to live their best lives and do the best they can for each other and themselves. Unity between the Church and the wider communities. More open events. Be more open minded to change. Be accepting and understanding. Don't be afraid to reach out to others. Get out of the comfort zone. Be one—our love/core batteries. Unite with everyone on a global scale. Be more welcoming to change. Be open and understanding of new members of the community. Relationships of science and the Church to help others and evolve the beliefs among people in contemporary society. That the interrelationships between science and Catholicism continue to grow and evolve in our contemporary and diverse society.

To revive parishes encouraging families and the laity to become more missionary. To encourage formation of the laity by forming small groups whereby solid Catholic formation is offered such as programs by Dr Scott Hahn, Bishop Robert Barron, Dr Edward Sri. Not only spiritual formation but also formation in virtues. For more reverence and silence before, during and after Mass so that the congregation can prepare well for Mass and Holy Communion. That the homilies are used as opportunities to form the laity in the Truths of our Church so that we can live out our Catholic faith with love and understanding. That the sacrament of confession is properly explained and encouraged. Formation, formation, formation is needed so that people really understand the Mass!! If this happened nobody would think of leaving the Catholic Church.

As a country of cultural diversity, God is asking for assimilation and harmony amongst all cultures without conflicts based on ethnicity and beliefs. We are all one people and our interdependence on each other. Shapes our values, faiths and beliefs—not individually. Our creator, is the created of good will, unity—not segregation, prosperity, gratitude, righteousness, justification and humility.

To become a change agent for organised religion. Decisive action is required. To do and be seen to take the issue of institutional abuse and deal with it. The Catholic Church should lead the way. Be proud and embracing.

I think God is asking us to be patient and faithful. Like the desert wanderings of the Israelites, I believe Australian Catholics are entering a period of searching and testing. We are paying for the sins of our current and previous generations. As a progressively secular society we feel more and more disconnected and yet God and God's call is constant. As a Church that has failed and hurt so many, we must be humble and seek God's heart and forgiveness from those whom we have abandoned and betrayed.

- Please stop saying Hail Marys during Mass. No “foreign” prayers to the Mass should be said before Communion. Please say Hail Marys, Plenary Council prayers or any other “foreign” prayers at least AFTER Communion, but preferably after the Final Blessing.
- Please stop changing the wording of the Mass. All Masses throughout the world should be said with the same wording. Words are added. Words are changed. It’s not right or fair to the devout.
- Please stop air conditioning the [-] churches. The air conditioned Churches are hot and stuffy. [-] Chapel, [-] has been ruined by the air conditioning. It is now hot, stuffy and smells.
- The Christmas lights (Christmas 2018) and accompanying loud broadcasting at [-] Cathedral were a disgrace. We had coloured lights beaming into the Cathedral during Masses at Christmas. It was akin to a movie theatre. Sacrilegious.
- Could all priests please give Our Lord on the tongue graciously?
- Do we know what sin is anymore? It’s not spoken about from the pulpit. Catholics need to be reminded.
- At the Elevation could the Body and Blood of Our Lord be held high above the priest’s head for a considerable amount of time?
- The cantor at [-] Cathedral now has his/her back to the priest and the Altar during Mass. I find it irreverent and distracting.
- Please put the Tabernacle back on the Altar in all Churches or at least just behind the Altar.
- If there is more than one priest on the Altar, could the additional priest/s give out Holy Communion instead of lay people?

- To help those who need help
- Be respectful—especially of other cultures
- Stand up for others
- Work towards peace
- To pray
- Love one another as Jesus loves us

To love one another as He has loved us. UNCONDITIONALLY. To walk HUMBLY with our God.

We live in times where it is seen as normal to over-consume, to degrade the environment without worry and to be unkind to others justified by self-interest. We think that God is asking us to reject this approach: to be kind and compassionate, to find meaning outside consumerism and to look after our world.

The below is what came to me as a prophetic word during the listening session... "Open up! Get out of your enclosed state—you are a Church for the world, not a Church for yourselves. "For God so loved the world..." (Jn 3:16) Do not cling so tightly onto your ways of existing, rather cling tightly to me! And to the gospel I gave you "... that whoever believes may not perish, but have eternal life." 'Whoever' is larger than you now think! "Go out into the highways and side-streets

and invite them all in, that My House may be full", says the Lord.' I believe God is asking the Church in Australia at this time not to be timid or prophetically limited in our vision and leadership, nor to compare ourselves to the direction or models of the Church in history. They have NEVER been where we are. These times call for courage to step out and explore new ways of being the Church, that are in step with our culture, and at the same time returning to dynamic new testament approach to ministry. What might this look like? 1. A 'Culture of Pentecost'—we talk about a 'new evangelisation' as essential, yet the grace of baptism in the Spirit which Pope Francis is fully supportive of, has yet to be embraced and promoted as the foundation of that mission. As the Bishops of [-] said, "There can be no new evangelisation without a new Pentecost." And the Lord's own words are still dismissed in our formal Church: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the Gift my Father promised..." 2. LAY people PREACHING at Mass—The same rule should apply where those who have a recognised charism for a ministry exercise that gifts, and the proclamation of the Word not be bound by an office (e.g. priest). It is impractical, uninspiring and doing daily damage to the new evangelisation we say that we are committed to. 3. The WORSHIP MUSIC that we subject visitors (and ourselves) to should reflect the contemporary age of the people we are called to reach and NOT reflect the culture of the Church. i.e. The mission-field needs to be put back as our uncompromising focus: "The mission has a Church"—everything needs to flow from that! Everything in the road of communicating that needs to go, such as robes, pomp and clericalism. I believe it is actually a wonderful opportunity that lies before us if we dared to embrace it with courage! 4. Celebrations of Mass as Church (i.e. emphasising our original ecclesiology as 'living stones') would be held in public, 'non-traditional Church' venues and environments that attract and engage the modern Australian culture, i.e. 'we need to go to them'. It's WAY too late to hold onto a 'come-to-us' model in a post-Christian culture. We need to be evangelistic and creative—or die. 5. "Sell your possessions, give to the poor then come follow Me." The credibility of the Church will only recover from a grass-roots model that does the above but goes further: like St Francis, identifies with the poor and VISIBLY empties its power and money. The world is watching.

I think God isn't asking anything more or less than he always has. That we love Him and Love one another, that we be led by the spirit, that we know his love for us is unconditional and that he desires relationship with us.

God asks us to listen to Holy Mary Mother of God who told us countless times what to do: 1. Pray, pray, pray (especially Holy Rosary which many of us don't know how to meditate), 2. Repent (for our constant failures, falling into brainwashing by the Mass media, political correctness, modernism, etc.), 3. Fast (strict :bread and water) Holy Mother Herself told us that through Holy Rosary and fast we can save ourselves from wars , even suspend the law of nature. Each one of us has to start the change with ourselves. So help us God. Amen.

I believe God is asking us to be brave and steadfast. To hold fast to the truth, be compassionate and humble and brave in our efforts to evangelise.

- Improve our communication with God.

- Helping the poor.

- Guiding the young and those who don't know.
- Communicate with all people.
- Improve our Christian teaching.

To be Christ to people... And to bring Christ to everyone. The Church should be a place that people feel welcome. I believe God is asking us to be an active, open, welcoming Church (Church in the sense of people). God does not want us to bicker and fight about which is the "most correct" liturgical practise. I believe God is asking us to be a unified Body. To invest in our young people—with money, time and resources. To take our Catholicity seriously. Provide more formation for parishioners. More vocational awareness for young people. Catholic educational institutions to be more than just Catholic in name. Engaged in ecumenical action and interreligious dialogue

To pause from the business of our lives and reflect on our relationship with HIM.

- Working hard with our children in order to teach them the real God, a loving God that is alive and is with us all the time.
- Providing effective strategies to schools, primary and secondary for the evangelisation of our children and youngsters.
- Teachers in Catholic schools shall profess and live actively the Catholic faith, not only those teaching religious education but all teachers.
- Catholic schools shall encourage that their students' parents profess the Catholic faith.
- Priests and the clergy should emphasise how sacred is the Mass and request the outmost respect to the filigrees, starting by a dress code, conduct code so that we create a real space of celebration in every Mass.
- Promote a real integration of the minority cultural groups to participate in the Australian Church so we can all can share the same faith with different manifestations.
- Establish formal workshops for little children during Mass so they understand at their level what the adults are celebrating.

Return to faithful, prayerful engagement with the world after being refreshed by sublime liturgy in a beautiful Church. Music has the power to rewire the brain. Engage skilled musicians to bring music from the Church's treasury alive. Train church choirs to sing in harmony, to calm our fears, raise our minds and hearts to God and lead us in prayerful song, so that we gather strength to face the daily battle with sin and its consequences in the world. Grasp the opportunity on offer to go into the state schools to teach the Catholic faith to students who otherwise have no experience of the Church, encounter with prayer or consideration of life's deepest questions. Engage in a concerted campaign to recruit, educate and support catechists for this vital role. Provide them with an engaging program which includes all the essentials of the faith. Provide further faith education to youth and adults in the parishes outside of Mass. Support the provision of a course of Natural Family Planning to every couple planning marriage in a Catholic Church. Also offer information about this course to families asking for baptism of their children. Support training of NFP instructors and provide them with space to meet clients. Stop beating our breasts about the

sins of other people in the Church. Examine our own consciences and repent of our own sins. Be forthright in exposing evil or questionable practices by anyone. Facilitate and support volunteers in sharing God's message with the world in the multiple ministries to which they feel called. Do not stifle that energy with unnecessary and repetitious red tape. Staff employed by the Church should not lord it over volunteers who ultimately provide their income. Families should be supported in their crucial role. Older youth could be linked to families with young children to assist them at Mass. Elderly people could be linked with families who have no nearby grandparents to assist each other and share intergenerational energy and wisdom. Practical efforts to assist women in crisis pregnancies should be assisted by provision of administrative support by dioceses and recruitment and support of volunteers in parishes. Rosters for prayer and adoration should be developed in every parish. This would also enable the Churches to be kept open during the day for casual visits for prayer. Kneeling during reception of Holy Communion should be facilitated for those who desire it. A prie dieu could be provided for this purpose if there is no altar rail. If there is an altar rail, then the communicants could stand or kneel as desired across the row. This would also enable people to reflect in prayer for a moment before they move off and would be less stressful for the elderly and those who move slowly as they would not be impeding the next person's reception of communion.

To lead the way in being accessible to all age groups, especially the young. To be engaging and open to accepting that even if people disagree with the teachings of the Church, we love them without judgement. That we're not afraid to engage intelligent people (including our lay people), to dialogue with other non-Catholics about a range of subjects, with mutual respect; core beliefs, strategies to be accountable, whatever may come along. We need (for want of a better word) revival. Where is the power of the Holy Spirit being spoken of, conferences focusing on spiritual growth etc.; engaging speakers who could help us to be more than 'lukewarm'.

To walk with Jesus. Show leadership. Listen. Welcome our community into the Church. We are so far from Rome and do not really have much input there. Also—the women have no say whatsoever. It seems so irrelevant to us in Australia and so remote—distance, Aussie attitudes, thinking and behaviours. I am so fed up with women not having a fair go in the Catholic Church. Jesus did not keep putting women down. In today's works he would give them a fair go. In NZ the Anglicans had fondness priests. Bishop Penny was a great leader. Women cannot even be Deacons—no ordination for women. It is not good at all. I have worked as a professor and chaired boards etc. Yet the Catholic Church decides women are not as good as men—they cannot be priests. Also—let priests be married. Let them have families. Others in the community who serve the community, manage family life plus their service. Will anything change? Those making decisions did not get there by being men who question the rules, so I doubt it. I am investigating the Anglicans because I do not accept the Catholic Church's explanations as to why women cannot be ordained and why priests cannot be married. Jesus was man of his time. If he was here now, do you seriously think he would tell women they are not good enough to be priests? Or tell priests they cannot marry? It is like we are so tied to the mores of biblical times and cannot live in the present day. If the Church's message and its practices are not relevant to HBF people of today, then it will wither. I doubt this Plenary Council will do much, by way of change, because it is led, and decisions are made by ... men who have learned not to buck the system.

We live in a country which has institutionalized inequality which the Church is in the forefront of addressing. For example the SVDP in particular is at the forefront of caring for the casualties of our society. Catholic education is by measures of quality and cost is performing well albeit that spirituality may be missing out. This is the good news and this message is being lost. The image of the Church has been catastrophically damaged by the inappropriate actions of a few. Without improving the Church's image we cannot hope to grow the Church. We must in good faith participate in the redress scheme, even if this means having difficult financial conversations with the Church going parishioners in the pews. I understand that money is not the full answer to the repair the damage to the victims of child abuse; however if we are not seen to act fairly, in good faith and some degree of generosity, the toxic negative press will dominate. The Church has to be more active in areas social justice and morality. The single biggest issue of our time is the damage being done to the environment, Pope Francis left Catholics in no doubt that they have a moral obligation to conserve the resources of the earth and ensure a more even distribution of the earth's resources. This was a strong message that the former PM Tony Abbot could not accept and effectively stated that the pope had erred. Despite the encyclical being sanctioned by the pope on a matter of morals (infallible?), I have not heard a single homily preached on the substance of the encyclical. I cannot claim to have read the full document (it is hard going), however I have read a significant amount of it and believe I have a reasonable understanding of what practicing Catholics are obliged to do. In terms of the priesthood I know what God is not asking us to do and that is have priests living in what are in some cases quite remote areas ministering to communities spread over parishes bigger than some European countries without any human companionship. Our parish had a Nigerian priest who had lived in a community with several other priests before coming to Australia. Imagine the culture shock of moving to Australia compounded by living in the suburbs on his own, perhaps for the first time in his life. There is a significant waste of human resource, that is, priests who have left the priesthood to be married. The Australian Church faces very different circumstances from Italy, South America or Africa, we need to separate what it means to be a Catholic from the means of delivery. The priesthood must change, what are currently seen as options which are not palatable to the Vatican have to be considered here. Parachuting "missionaries" from Africa into Australian parishes is not a sustainable solution. In secular life there is an expectation that young people now will have several different jobs during their working life, the Church may have to accept some more flexibility in its workforce!

Renew our parishes. Call for new evangelisation models. Be relevant to modern life, Get parish priests to be more proactive and relevant with their communities. Better train religious educators and other teachers in Catholic schools. Find a way to bring families from Catholic school to become normal attenders of Mass in the local parish. Educate people with the rich treasure of the sacraments and Catholic documents in a way that is relevant to people. Involve lay people. Think of young families. Embrace the gifts and the power of the Spirit.

To join with all good people—to be the leaven—lift people up—spread joy—share stories—provide places where people can come together to celebrate—to share—to be safe—to make Theatre, promote plays, stories, novels, music which promote the gospel—to be a light in the darkness—to truly repent of past sins—to build theatres, write films, video, stories of ourselves Australian people, our joys and struggles and history—in the light of the gospel—to join with and

promote other inter-faith groups to speak to the hearts of people—the Christian Gospel message and the culture of life. To help the message to be spread through the new media—to teach and develop safe methods of promoting the gospel through new media—but to ensure live drama has a place—promote Christian groups spreading the Message of the Gospel—such as the Iona Passion Play, Villanova players, the Genesians and others. Help these groups to establish other similar groups in every diocese. Encourage and assist groups to move between dioceses and major centres to continue to tell the Christian story—in the face of more secular media.

Engage with young people by having more energy in the Church (more engaging, more tangible, increased participation) and more opportunities for their involvement. An increased engagement of priests at schools and relationship with the community is also needed. People today prefer to learn by sharing so increasing that style of interaction through thought groups, socialising around Mass, children's liturgy style of breaking open the Word. A final point God is asking is to make the music relevant to people today: modern language, pace, not boring.

Submission 1: FORMATION—

- The Church needs to make people feel welcome and have a sense of belonging.
- This needs to cover the whole of a person's life from childhood to retirement and beyond.
- Meet people where they are at—don't expect the Church's programs are necessarily right for everyone.
- Formation needs to convert to action, participation and self-renewal.

Submission 2:

- God is asking for more genuine workers in the vineyard—not just priests / clergy but also lay people who will work to help the propagation of the faith and keep Christ's burning love alive.

Submission 3: TAKING ACTION—

- By knowing and loving God, by working together as a community, to bring peace and unity, to be an example for the young people of the Church and to be mindful of the needs of others.

Submission 4:

- Work on the Mission of the Church—of spreading the God of love and his word to all, especially the marginalised, the youth, the vulnerable and the grassroots in society.
- Include more of the laity in Church processes.

Submission 5:

- Increase the connection between Catholic schools and parishes by:

- o Employing teachers / Principal who follow the faith.
- o More 'whole school' celebration of Mass.
- o Greater presence of priest in school.
- o Staff need to be able to stand up for faith in the school to keep the Catholic identity.

Submission 6:

- Church needs to respond to the following issues facing society:
 - o Disbelief in God and Church is considered "fashionable".
 - o There are things pushing people away / competing distractions such as materialism / technology which can be positive but may also be addictive.
 - o Parishioners not understanding or are afraid of traditions of the Church.
 - o Reaching out to the youth of today and focussing on what are relevant issues for them.
 - o Supporting families to have confidence to share their faith with others.

The same that has always been asked of us—to live the gospel message of love. That we demonstrate this by being communities of love caring for each other, the poor and marginalised and being good stewards of the earth's resources. That we live with joy and simplicity at all levels of the Church and in our liturgies.

God is asking for a new power structure to be organized in the Church. Women in all decisions made including existing priests being rehired and all clergy assessed by lay panels. We need to acknowledge present contraceptive rules are morally wrong. Children who are loved and able to be afforded are much better off. Married men and women should be given right to be priests. All sexual abuse in every state should be acknowledged by each diocese. Priests, bishops and cardinals should take off their costumes and look like modern men. No Medieval beings. Modernize all forms of liturgies. Allow debate after Mass in the Churches like a meeting, At the moment no one is game to say anything

- More young people taking up the role of priest.
- Changes to the Mass—a more interactive Mass, more modern Christian songs that young people enjoy such as My Lighthouse, opportunities for singing and dancing.
- Activities for young people—Camps, etc.
- Priests should be allowed to marry and have a family. This would increase the number of young people taking up the role of priest.
- Increased roles for women in the Church, such as priest.
- Mass could be held in other venues besides Church, such as smaller community spaces.
- Special Masses for young people.

- Priests must go through interviews, psychological assessment etc. to ensure suitability for working with children.
- More money should be invested into charities, events to help people find their faith, formation programs etc.
- The Catholic Church needs to think about how it can be more inclusive and welcoming of all members of the community i.e. gay people.
- Shorter Mass.
- Priests need to be more engaging and more relatable.

I believe God is asking us to be Christians who believe in his essential message and do so in a modern way, true to our faith's beginnings and yet our time. The Catholic Church clearly needs and is seeking renewal, but which way to go? Stripping away centuries of accretion to again reveal the simplicity and essential truth of God's plan and truth revealed through Christ is perhaps a way forward. Do we need another Vatican council, similar to the second council of Pope John 23rd? Perhaps, for that period of renewal was profound in its effects and bringing the faithful to God. The current diaspora of Catholic faithful from the Church is but one evidence of this and the crying need for the Church to simplify itself and accept genuine renewal. We see the falling Church attendance in our parish, where the children and families of the adjacent parish school largely don't attend Mass or more importantly participate in the Church. Please do understand that a fight is going on for the future of our Church, while we seem preoccupied with its past and present.

That we tell the world about Him in order that all souls may know him, love him and serve Him, in order that all souls may be saved for eternity, using primarily our actions, and words only when necessary as St. Francis tells us. We need to live simply, love in action and word, share our resources and help a materialistic society riddled with substance abuse realise that the way they are striving does not bring happiness, now or for eternity.

-A return to tradition with adherence to Orthodoxy, the truth of the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers. To be faithful to Christ, His Gospel, His Mission, His Magisterium. Christ's teaching does not change, and those who attempt to stand firm on the orthodox teachings are at risk of discouragement or worse.

-Bishops who uphold the faith as outlined in the Catechism.

-Catechetical training for priests.

-Catechesis in schools by true practising Catholics. Explain sacramentals, enrol children in the scapula, teach about the Saints and true Church history and the Bible.

-Ongoing adult catechesis in the Faith, the Catechism, St Paul VI's 'Humanae Vitae', and St John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body'. An incorrect understanding of sex and sexuality has had a dramatic effect on the Church.

-Faithful and holy celibate male priests, wearing visible clerical clothing in public.

-Orthodox teaching from the pulpit. Rejecting contraception, 'Gay Marriage', LBTQI, Divorce and remarriage.

-Priests visiting the sick, demonstrating living humbly and simply, welcoming children, preaching on the sacrament of confession and providing ample opportunity to make use of this sacrament.

-Reverent and holy offerings of the Holy Sacrifice. Stamping out of abuses within the Mass. Converts are converting as we have the REAL presence of Our Lord, but other than that, we disappoint them as we have sadly incorporated so much of general society and Protestantism into our liturgy and expectations. Reinstate high expectations of behaviour both at Mass and at home. Instruct the faithful to dress, act and prepare accordingly to approach the king of the universe at Mass.

-Support for Ordinariate priests and those willing to provide the option of a Latin Mass for their parish as Emeritus Pope Benedict recommended. These Masses are a beautiful part of our heritage and history and more conducive to silence and reverence in the Church.

-SUPPORT for and encouragement of the growing religious orders that are mostly habited and making them known in schools.

-Cessation of use of extraordinary ministers. The numbers at most parishes do not necessitate them. Also the horrid overuse of the second rite of Reconciliation.

-Devotion to the blessed sacrament which was unambiguously endorsed by Benedict XVI and John Paul II, and encouragement for perpetual adoration

-Strong devotion to our blessed mother and the 9 First Fridays and 5 First Saturdays as requested through [-] and [-] respectively.

Leadership in the Australian Church needs to represent the wider Catholic Community. We don't need to have leaders who are 'ordained', as I think is usually the blending of ideas. The reality is that many ordained men in the Church have limited leadership outside of their own parish.

However, our Church is represented by Married men and Women, Ordained Men, Religious Men and Women, and Celibate Men and Women. The role of Cardinal is often mistaken as an ordained role, and while the 1917?? Code Of Canon Law, and the 1984 Code Of Canon Law stipulate who a cardinal is to be, these are laws the Church have put in place over time. They are not infallible and are able to be changed easily. Having a representative body in the Australian Leadership of the Catholic Church does not usurp the clerical role in the Church and would allow people (inside and outside the Church) to see the clerical class within the Church change. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference could set up a structure where representatives of these groups (above) are formally recognised as members of the Conference, with similar rites to the ordained. In the same way governments and committees discuss policy and strategy, this group should carry the same responsibility. They also should have the same weight when it comes to decision making.

Obviously a quorum would need to apply when making decisions, however the Ordained within the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference would then be publicly and visible consulting, working and decided with representatives of the entire Church. This would then be a 'city on a hill' for the rest of the Church, those within and those without. There is no reason that this would not work, and it doesn't impact doctrine in any way. Politics and power are the only things that get in the

way of this. Indeed, there are areas within the Church leadership where this sort of occurs, as bishops consult and take counsel from these other groups within the Church, however... HOWEVER, this is not obvious, known or even celebrated by the bishops in a way that allows our leadership to be open for review, fair criticism or access. I have worked and facilitated many leadership models, and this approach would help launch our Church beyond the accusations of clericalism, celibate males making decisions, and move to a Church that is relevant, meaningful and Christ filled. That way we can get on with what Christ called us to be.

* To be transparent, acknowledge at every opportunity the mistakes of the past.

* MOVE, move forward with a trust that God will provide, this is His Church, He will build it up.

* Invest in young people, they are the current Church and once they truly encounter the risen God they will transform the future of the Church.

* Increase the people's knowledge and understanding of Theology of the Body, this is a source of LIFE and LOVE that people are longing for.

* Quit the 'guard the little we have' attitude and actually invest in faith formation, pastoral care and ministries. There will be nothing left to guard if we don't trust that God will provide.

Given the week we have endured, my response is guided by the old adage—speak in anger; it will be the best speech you will ever regret. What is God asking?!! Fortunately, I have no idea but what I hope is that:- >He does not permit the gloriously robed old men to interfere with the current and on-going good works of the Laity; and that He instructs Jesus to enter the Vatican, as he did the Temple, and clean the place right out. The perceptions from the visuals of the recent Synod are incomprehensible—to all appearances this group of astonishingly richly gowned old men processing as if off to the Oscars on the red carpet. Please read some of the excellent pieces published this past week and could I suggest you go to Ch 12 of Greg Sheridan's book "God is Good for You" for starters and then have a good talk with Geraldine Doogue in relation to her article in the Weekend Australian 2/3 March 2019. I think it was Einstein who said "Insanity—doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." The defensive bishops can be relied upon to hold firmly to their long held defensive positions without realising no one is listening to them.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? For all the Catholic congregation—both parishioners and clergy—to appreciate the good priests we have in many parishes—those who identify with their parishioners, who do not set themselves apart, who are honest and humble and who, themselves, are prepared to follow the path that they ask parishioners to follow in their homilies. Those priests who encourage lively discussion, who are not afraid of dissenting voices and new ideas, who can facilitate and lead these discussions towards enlightened outcomes. Those priests who are inclusive—who treat men and women, the aged and the young, the marginalised and the forgotten as equal to themselves, who are supportive and prepared to listen and walk with them in their journey of faith. We need clergy such as these to mentor newly-ordained priests and those who come from other countries to ensure that they are given the support and opportunities to serve their congregations in appropriate ways. We—both laity and clergy—need to learn how to 'walk humbly with our God'.

More understanding and forgiving. More welcoming of everyone.

To show love for all. To be inclusive. To allow priests to be fathers. To report child abuse even if this information is received through the confessional. God would not support the current situation I strongly believe. To become relevant so that God's good words can reach more people.

A return to the primary mission of the Church, the conversion of all to Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. • A return to the Magisterium as codified in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. • A return to the numinous and the transcendent in our worship. • Catechesis on the faith—in schools, in homes, and in our Churches. • A return to tradition. Adherence to Orthodoxy and orthopraxy. • Bishops who uphold the faith as outlined in the Catechism. • Faithful and holy celibate male priests. • Reverent and holy offerings of the Holy Sacrifice. • A return to our primary mission, the salvation of souls. • Strong devotion to our blessed mother. • Orthodox teaching from the pulpit—touching on the hot topics with good explanations. • Devotion to the blessed sacrament; this was most strongly felt with the parishes that had perpetual adoration. Catechesis • Strong catechesis in our schools in the Faith of Christ, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church • Ongoing adult catechesis in the Faith, through the teaching of the Catechism. • Catechesis on St Paul VI's 'Humanae Vitae', and St John Paul II 'Theology of the Body'. The Plenary Council might review the impact that the tendency to allow an inadequate understanding of sex and sexuality has on the reality of human life in Australia, and on the Church in particular. Do not allow the Church to legitimise secular ideals and viewpoints on issues like 'Gay Marriage'; LBTQI, Divorce and remarriage (without an annulment). These are against Church teaching and have always been condemned. Christ's teaching does not change, and those who attempt to stand firm on the orthodox teachings are at risk of discouragement or worse. The Church is losing its way, moving from its primary purpose of the Salvation of all souls, to a social justice model. It is our duty, a duty of love, to tell all about Christ, to bring all people into the Church, to love all people into the Church, and not at the same time to lessen the Gospel, or to let our own sins, weaknesses, and opinions get in the way. We are called to be faithful to Christ, His Gospel, His Mission, His Magisterium.

Leadership and Communication: Church leadership is one of the issues at the heart of the current crisis in the Church. The people of God feel let down, and even betrayed, by the way Church leaders have handled the matter of sexual abuse of minors, including with the attempts to cover up these crimes. The recent Royal Commission correctly identified the major cause as the culture of clericalism. We understand this as the assumed exclusive status and sense of privilege belonging to the ordained over the non-ordained. It comes from the dubious theological proposition that the sacrament of Orders brings about an essential, "ontological", difference between the ordained and the non-ordained, which results in a sense of entitlement with the potential for an abuse of power over others. The clergy have been seen as "superior" and "set apart". We urge Church leaders (bishops) to be more pro-active in asserting their rights as members of the College of bishops, responsible for the governance of the Church in union with the Pope, the bishop of Rome. Since the Second Vatican Council, the best word to describe the performance of the Australian Episcopal Conference is "timidity". Pope Francis has more than once urged bishops in local Churches to show more initiative. Above all, recent events have surely shown the need for an increasing role for the laity (including women) in the area of governance,

at both diocesan and parish levels. Lay people (perhaps especially women) should have a greater role in Church leadership. The present system has failed. The laity after all make up 99.5% membership of the people of God. We should still think and talk in terms of ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful, but let us consign to oblivion any “ontological” difference between the two. As for communication, we now have a serious problem that was unforeseen a generation ago (or even less). The Church has lost much of its moral authority and credibility, and it will be difficult to regain it. It will never happen if we continue to see communication in terms of proclamation to the world of doctrines and moral imperatives that we expect people to conform to. Classical examples of this failed approach were Paul VI’s encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*”, and Benedict’s condemnation of homosexuality as “intrinsicly disordered behaviour”. In our communication, we must be prepared to be a listening Church. We must not project ourselves, as if we had all the answers because we don’t. We must become a healthier, humbler and holier Church. Our proclamation must be about Jesus and His message. It’s really very simple—about love, mercy and forgiveness, justice, tolerance, unity and peace. Over 2000 years, we have complicated it with our creeds, codes of canon law, papal decrees, and so on. The only way the Church will regain its moral authority and credibility is by proclaiming the message of Jesus, humbly and gently to the world.

God is asking me what we do to include the marginalized, like the gay couples. Are gay couples in the minority who believe marriage is a worthy institution? Many heterosexual couples decide not to marry yet go on to have children and build a connected household that has no spiritual sanction. Our youngest daughter is partnered with a girl so am I not able to offer her the same allegiance to Jesus as I have offered to my other children, two of whom got married before God? I am also aware of people who are in a same sex relationship who love God and want to continue their faith but because they must make their life secret they stay away from the Church. It breaks my heart that they have no place in God’s house, yet they were baptized Catholics. God is asking me why priestly roles for women are not allowed in our Church? Many gifted and grace-filled Catholic women I know are not permitted to have a major role in our Church. I know of a Uniting Church Minister who is a priest, can marry people in any environment but brings the word of God to the ceremony, has a say in how the congregation is run, supports women and men spiritually, has a family of her own, has tertiary theological qualifications and gives sermons regularly. I feel that a male and female hierarchy where decisions and rules are made by both would not have tolerated the sexual abuse of children. I even doubt women will be present to assess the submissions for this Plenary Council. You can see how used we are to being disenfranchised. I would also attest that a mix of female and male priests with theological knowledge would widen the appeal of Mass attendance and provide dynamic sermons unlike the dreary Old Testament ones we hear from male priests of African ethnicity. When will our Church be made representative of God’s people?

List of all the shared responses to this question:

- Jesus’ teachings (let Him teach me).
- Bring the Gospel to our homes, workplaces, study places.
- Teach more about liturgy (Eucharist) and about “what does the Church offer”.

- Grow/mature in Faith—get informed about the Catholic Church, basic knowledge on Catholicism, what does it mean to have Faith?
- Guide the children in our Faith (they receive the sacraments when they are too little, not understanding what is all about, they make promises they don't understand, like the promises of Faith during the sacrament of Confirmation).
- Family—integrate the family—parents don't know how to guide their children—create spaces to guide the family to unify them, educate them and strengthen them.
- Unity within the family is important (our first Church).
- Open up to the Australian people—spread our “Latin-American Faith”.
- Go out—give testimony by good deeds—talk about our faith openly to pass it on to others, to “infect them with our faith”—invite others.
- Attract and work for and with the youth, as when they are motivated, they give themselves wholeheartedly.
- Trust in the Holy Spirit, that He works in a subtle way.
- Help one another.
- More and better communication/information. There is lack of communication and knowledge
- A worldwide problem is division among Catholics—educate the people about what the Church is, what does it mean to be Catholic.
- We don't know how to pray (other than reciting the Our Father and Hail Mary).
- Update the Church in taboo topics (e.g. the use of condoms).

TOPIC CHOSEN FOR OUR LISTENING AND DIALOG ENCOUNTER: BE A TESTIMONY OF OUR FAITH

- Don't let the surroundings overshadow us.
- From the little we have, it is a lot what we can give (like today's Gospel, the widow gave more than anyone else, despite it was just a few coins, these coins were all she had).
- Give from our spiritual richness to the ones who think they lack anything.
- No one can give what they don't have.
- Be a testimony of our faith with our lives: as a partner, as a worker, as a community member (do not say: “go to Mass”, but go to Mass and invite others to go with you).
- Make ourselves the question: Am I leaving a mark of my faith at work/ at home?
- Open my eyes, mind and heart to see “my neighbour” in everyone, and treat them as I want to be treated.

Leadership

—Celibacy is a problem—make it optional—not all priests are celibate—married priests can move from CofE to Catholic with their wife and family. Allow Catholic priests who leave to marry the same rights.

—Married male priests can be holy and dedicated and capable of doing the job. They could be more effective.

—Women clergy work in the CofE. They could work for us too. Why not? They can give a different perspective to the male dominated community and there is plenty of talent out there. Get real. We need more priests.

—Reconsider the use of the Third Rite of Reconciliation.

—Recognise the primacy of conscience.

Celibacy

—There is an impression that holiness is more associated with celibacy than marriage. This is not true. God calls married couples to holiness not in spite of their married state but through it.

—Celibate abuse of handicapped people. 43% of St John of God brothers were involved in the abuse of handicapped people. An investigation into recruitment and training is needed.

—Slack Catholics. There is no sense of belonging—bring back CYO, Children of Mary, Sacred Heart and Holy Name societies to help with belonging.

—Coffee machines can have a dramatic effect through building community after Mass.

—We are competing with cyberspace and its alternate communities. The Church can learn from this.

—What is the role of RE in Catholic schools in developing a sense of belonging?

Priests be allowed to marry and celibacy to be optional. Women deacons (for a start!) More feminine input into decision making, particularly in regard to family matters. Do away with Holy Days of Obligation.

I believe that God is asking us all to follow His commandments. To live with integrity, sincerity and humility. To love one another. We as a Church need to be all inclusive, we need to welcome into our Church all who believe in the works of Jesus, regardless. We need to accept women into the highest levels of the Church hierarchy. Women need to have the opportunity to be ordained. To allow priests to marry. I also believe we need independent lay people as advisors on issues that affect our communities to work in conjunction with the cardinals to voice people's concerns. Priests need to acknowledge past failings in the guardianship of children and vulnerable adults. To place a definite plan in action to eliminate further abuse of children. It is not good enough to have a book of instruction on how to handle further abuse. And to talk about it. We need to change the way priests appear to be protected and the victim being marginalised and threatened when an incident is reported. There needs to be a balance of power between the Church and its

congregation. I also know that God is telling us to look after our planet, our home. Jesus is telling us to be more humble and to live within our means. This idea was very important to Jesus and his disciples. God is telling us that the structure of the Church needs to be more inclusive. Are our modern day clergy like the Pharisees in the time of Jesus? Not connected.

God is asking us to strengthen our commitment to Him and be the most compassionate and faithful community we can be. He wants us to move forward by changing the way that we express our faith to the world and to our world or closer community in such a way that they are impressed by the way we live and how we put others before ourselves in everything that we do, every day. I think this means that the clergy must make changes to support this evolution of community and outreach.

Firstly to listen to the people of the Church. Do not dismiss ideas that conflict with your own. The hierarchical structure of the Church needs to change to reflect current thinking. The role of females in that structure needs to be more apparent. Prayerful guidance is needed to allow those making these decisions to put aside their own opinions. Our mission is to bring the Good News of the gospel to the world. We all have a part to play according to our gifts.

To consider the opportunity for anyone to become a priest and priest and religious should be free to marry. To accept all people and family structures without judgement. To consider relevance to nurture people's faith so to engage youth, update the Mass—no need to change the elements but celebrate in them a more creative, relevant way that engages the. Community—Make a conscious effort to rebuild trust with wider community, unite parish with schools and wider community. To be visible leaders of social justice. Hand the Church back to the people—the upside down pyramid, servant leadership... To strive to be a proactive Church with current issues. Strive to be open and authentic. We need to empower people to ministry. Purposefully aim to be inter-generational—"Children are not the child of the future—they are the Church now!"

1. Constant spiritual renewal, evangelisation and ecological conversion achieved via:

a) Every parishioner being active in household prayer groups, tailored for households, youth, and single adults (similar to the Catholic "Couples for Christ" organisation).

b) Community fellowship, i.e. Sunday lunch in the parish hall.

c) Parish youth could be offered evangelisation training at, for example the ICPE (<http://www.icpe.org/>) training bases in Wellington New Zealand or their other bases worldwide.

2. We must respond to the global ecological crisis in the manner prescribed in LAUDATO SI', On Care For Our Common Home (2015), noting:

a) (Ref 219) ... "Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds.... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion". Meaning this response could also serve to enliven and liberate parishioners from destructive lifestyles and forge stronger ecologically sustainable communities ... and wow ... what a witness that would be!

b) The above would also free up resources, especially money, currently wasted by parishes and parishioners on energy and other non-renewable items.

I think God is asking us, here in Australia, to introduce people to Jesus. Many people who attended Mass, or our Catholic schools and our wider community have not had a personal encounter with Jesus, they do not experience a personal relationship with Jesus. As a result participating in the Eucharist is not, important or meaningful—it is just something they do out of guilt. Many families have their children "done" (sacraments of Initiation) in order to gain a place in the Catholic schools. If people could experience a personal encounter with Jesus... then perhaps the Eucharist would become more meaning and something they would truly love and miss if they were not able to celebrate it regularly.

a. Love of God and neighbour by incorporation of God in all things. Think and speak with goodwill and keep teaching of Church close to heart. b. parish and school strengthening, continuing, sustaining and nurturing Catholic religious education for the kids. c. Evangelisation and serious catechesis of children, adults and seminarians; includes serious marriage and all sacramental preparation. To live true to the teachings to be people of mission and reaching out. d. Improve clergy communication skills, leadership skills and presence/availability with the people (parishioners). Establish ways to monitor the performance in a timely manner. e. Support the establishment of a modern parishioner Identity and Relationship Management System that will properly recognise and nurture each parishioner's own unique spiritual growth in Christ.

*Mass is boring to children. Let's enculturate the liturgy so that families want to attend because they are nurtured by it and their children want to go.

*Adapt the rigidity of the liturgy so that it draws families to God.

*Give parishes the responsibility to enculturate the liturgy for their assembly.

* We need to start ministering to families. It's too late to start with young people—research says that children influence attendance. If they don't want to go, parents stop going.

*Clericalism will be the death of the Church. We are all baptised prophet and priest. Let me live my mission as a baptised woman.

*Clerical attire is not relevant today. It is grandiose and reeks of money which would be better spent on the poor. Yes, we bring our best to God, wear our Sunday best, but the richness on display, especially at 'cathedral' liturgies is embarrassing.

*Bishops who privilege a particular style of liturgy or genre of music over another are divisive. Please make them stop. Our great big Church has room for all.

*Open leadership roles to laity, and women in particular.

*Parish priests are overworked and burning out. We want to help. Give us the ok to lead.

*Open and expand the roles of lay people in liturgy, including women, to include preaching, presiding, leading, teaching.

* There would seem to be no canonical or scriptural reason for us not to ordain women to the permanent diaconate. Let's do it now!

* Mary Magdalene was the first to proclaim the Good News. Why has this role been taken from women?

*Jesus' mother Mary was the first to say "this is my body, this is my blood". Why have women been excluded from saying this in the liturgy today?

*Ordain women to the priesthood, if that is their vocation.

*The Church should be the loudest voice in the country on matters of social justice. Catholic Social Teaching is the best kept secret of the Church. Let's shout it loudly!

*Especially Stewardship of Creation. The Church should be leading the way in environmental issues e.g. all Churches should have solar power and water tanks.

*The Church is too exclusive. We reject 'the other'. Let's open our hearts and arms to LGBTQI, the different, the other, divorced, remarried, etc. It makes no sense in light of the gospel to reject these people.

*The heart of Catholic schools should be Jesus. Too often, the religious life of the school is an afterthought or add on instead of a starting place. Teachers who are not Churched or who have few links to the faith life of the Church are disadvantaged when teaching in a Catholic school. It's hard to pass on a passion if you don't have it. Or an experience if it isn't real to you.

*The Church needs to innovate and change as is indicated by the signs of the times. It is not seen as relevant or real. For example, science knows that gay is not a choice. When will the Church catch up? We cannot make sense of or reconcile to a Church that is archaic in its thinking. Nor can we justify it to our children's satisfaction.

Continued: *Bringing in priests from overseas is not the answer. Language and culture barriers are harming the Church. We must find leadership from within. If that means leaders who are not presently eligible for ordination, then let it be so.

*Seminary training must destroy clericalism. Priests are ordained to serve. Let humility and service be the cornerstones of their formation.

*Encourage parishes to employ lay people in ministry. The day of the volunteer is in the past.

* Lay people are desperate for formation and education. They want to live their baptismal call with knowledge and wisdom.

*Indigenous Australians have such a deep spirituality which would enhance our Church so richly and lead to more authentic reconciliation. Let's work together to bring Aboriginal images, symbols etc. to our liturgy, especially.

*As hard as it is to be Catholic at the moment, I love our Church. Please don't let it die on the altar of tradition, for tradition's sake. The signs of the times are clear. Listen. Please.

To rediscover the beauty and power of the local Church. To redefine parish as communities of missionary disciples who are committed to forming places of belonging and growth for people to discover faith in Jesus and grow as disciples. To be prepared to relearn what it means to be missionary. To put introducing people to Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit as our primary task. I believe that Alpha program has an important role to play in helping us as Catholics to rediscover how to evangelise. Such a practical tool is proving very valuable in many places already. To learn a new paradigm of leadership that is suited to this time. To rediscover what co-responsibility means

between lay and ordained. For the clergy to share leadership and power and for laity to discover their role in leadership for the Church. We need new models for parish and leadership. Those presented by Divine Renovation are one with great promise. We need to be brave to step beyond our fears and pessimism to explore new models. Models that maintain the dignity of priesthood but do not overlay an over emphasis of clericalism. I think post Royal Commission, we also need to our high priority on learning to build welcoming and safe and nurturing communities where non-believers and those on the edges of our Faith can explore and rediscover the joy of Jesus. This is a task of all, not just a task of the clergy. Such welcoming safe and nurturing communities will do much to re-establish the Church's credibility and right to speak into the social issues of our time. We need to be brave in championing in each diocese (and this could mean resourcing) communities (parishes or movements or ethnic groups) who are leading the way and able to provide hope that renewal can happen. This will require strong leadership by the leaders in dioceses. Without such "lighthouse" communities we will struggle to find hope in a renewed Church. Where are these? I believe God is establishing them in our midst. Some of those come out of Divine Renovation inspiration. Others from an authentic social justice orientation. Others from the movements in the Church. God is at work renewing His Church. We need to recognise and nurture that work. I also pray that we will have one or two dioceses that step out with a brave new plan for their future that will incorporate a smaller number of parishes, an emphasis on lay-priestly leadership, and new buildings to reach the disenfranchised. There are some emerging models in Chicago and Halifax that could give inspiration. That will require an openness to new models of leadership and a fresh way at looking at the institution of the parish. New models are required for our post Christian culture.

I believe God is asking us to stay true to our convictions in the face of much public pressure from mostly outside the Catholic Church, which if not resisted will result in degeneration of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

I think that a lot of the beauty of the Mass has been lost for the sake of convenience or modernism. Very few parishes in my area sing at all during Mass these days, and there is an air of impatience in the congregation, as it seems everyone is in a rush for the Mass to finish within the hour so they can leave. I've started attending [-] Cathedral, a 40 or so minute drive from my home, since it is one of the very few Catholic Churches that I've found that actually protects the sacredness of the Mass through their use of appropriate singing and sacred instruments. The parishes in my area often play guitar and sing modern songs over classic hymns, and I think it is leading the Church to become something that it is not and should not be. I believe God would want Australia to protect the sacred music of the Mass and take every effort to ensure that it is a part of Mass in every parish. In older nations such as England or the United States, they have been blessed with beautiful old cathedrals that help to bring praise to God and protect the sacred nature of the Mass—causing the congregation to show a greater reverence to God during the Mass, rather than treating it as just a Sunday morning commitment. In Australia we are not blessed with as many physically beautiful places of worship, and as such it is very necessary that we take greater efforts to preserve the sanctity of the Mass through the use of appropriate music and singing.

I believe God is asking us to deepen the foundations of our faith by reconsidering the origins of our practice. The early Church was birthed in the power of the Holy Spirit and established in a Christocentric revelation of a loving God. Christ reveals that God is a trinity, a community, a family in His own substance and nature. We then see in the Lord's prayer in John 17:21 the desire of God for us to be in unity with one another in the same way that God is in unity within His own triune nature. I feel that the Spirit is calling us to rediscover a bond of unity transcendent of our structures and practice. This unity is found in what Saint Paul calls "the bond of perfection" and this bond is love. The early Church were a family of believers "the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19), before they were functioning missionaries or faithful parishioners or ordained Clergy. In the midst of the hostility of persecution they laid aside earthly dignity and found a mutual submission one to another that came by the supply of the Spirit. I believe this capacity to love one another is on the heart of the Spirit for His Church and extends beyond the Catholic tradition. Could it be that the agenda of the Holy Spirit is not in the establishment of one singular tradition but rather one unified faith, one baptism, one Lord and one Spirit. To the Fathers and Mothers—Clergy and Laity—of the Catholic faith, I believe a younger generation is crying out for an authentic faith that supplies life and freedom to the believer. They are looking for a living Christ who reveals the love of the Father in the power and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Tradition and practice cannot be the central focus of our formation if it doesn't truly facilitate the living presence of the Spirit. Jesus declares that the definable mark of the Christian faith would be that we would love one another (John 13:35). This is what we would be known by to the world. Currently we are known by things like irrelevance, tradition, perversion, war, disunity, control and the list goes on. Whether these defining attributes are true or not they are the current perception. I believe that a posture of humility toward God in this time is vital. Humility looks like questioning long-standing traditions and practices. It looks like finding points of commonality between denominations in order to learn from one another. It looks like being honest and vulnerable in regards to our faults for the sake of moving forward. I believe we are in a pivotal time of drastic change and we should move forward with true reverence and childlike faith to apply what He might be speaking. The Catholic tradition is rich with the knowledge and wisdom of the Spirit and we must strive to steward what we have been entrusted with whilst we allow God to re shape us back to our roots.

1. Respect for Natural Law. Moral relativism continues to confuse much of our population. Various secular ideologies now reigning supreme have eroded the concept of objective truth. Accordingly, there is an over-emphasis on rights over responsibilities. Radical feminism has infiltrated mainstream thought. The Church should not compromise her teachings in the pursuit of mainstream popularity. The orthodox elements of the Church find themselves increasingly isolated because they are opposed to the secular "culture of death" values. Young people want to hear the truth, they will not be attracted by a diluted message of "wishy-washy" "feel good empowerment." We oppose the concept of women priests.

2. Teach the rules of God (10 commandments) in ways to help people understand. To speak boldly about our faith with constant love, truth, compassion and justice to save many lives (souls) for Jesus who is suffering again because mankind has largely abandoned their heavenly and early wills.

3. Children and Youth. Engaging them. Keeping them. Making faith/God/Church relevant. Encouraging them.

4. How to bring the faith to children through school and family. Reintroduce catechesis. Teaching catechism in school. Reintroduce Penny Catechism. Involve children in weekend Mass. Reintroduce BCC—basic Christian communities. Small groups of families getting together once a month. Encourage teachers at Catholic schools to be practising Catholics.

5. To be faithful to Gospel and 10 commandments. Increase teaching of Catholicism in Catholic schools. Have a vital Catholic presence on the internet.

6. Youth—more interest. Parishes getting smaller. The teaching of the faith. Inviting people from outside the Church—e.g. Gospel to the banquet.

That the Church embraces the truth that the Church is all of its people, whether clergy or lay; That the Church strengthens and survives the current situation re: abuse by clergy; That the Church leaders—clergy and lay—show humility, compassion, wisdom, understanding and justice in all of their decisions and rulings; That the Church shows willingness to be relevant within our world, evolving to accommodate both the Church's traditions and the changes in the secular world; That decisions are made with open minds and hearts to include all people, especially within minority groups e.g. homosexual people, those estranged from their faith, refugees, divorcees, victims of domestic abuse (male and female); That marriage of clergy be more inclusively considered and allowed; That the ordination of women be debated and allowed; That divorcees be able to fully partake of Communion; That contraception be allowed, and seen as a right of choice by a woman/couple.

To listen to all people of the Church. The Holy Spirit does not only speak to Ordained clergy—the gifts of all members of the Church have not been fully recognised and listened to. To be authentic we as Church need to truly witness the teaching of Jesus.

God asks us to return baldly to the traditional teaching of our faith, based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church e.g. Decalogue, sacraments, basic truth of our faith, eternal things: heaven and hell. Also God wants us to address the contemporary issues: abortion, euthanasia, marriage between man and women, and show the immorality of homosexual behaviour, transgender issue, cohabitation of people without marriage, In Vitro etc.

I believe that God is asking the Church in Australia to listen to the many voices crying out about their spiritual needs, and the inability of the Church as it currently exists to fulfil them. In particular, the Church hierarchy must deal with the problem of sexual abuse perpetrated by so many of its ministers. Again I refer you to the work of the late [-], of [-]. I will append two of his articles. His widow, [-] and [-] who I believe is with [-] Centacare, or used to be, have been putting together his best works for publication as a collection. His insightful work on the matter of dealing with sexual abuse in the Church should not be ignored.

I am deeply concerned about the state of the Church right now. I am wondering, despite having been an active Catholic for the past 38 years, whether I should remain in the Church. I feel thoroughly compromised by what is happening with respect to the criminal abuse that has been

occurring for so long. I feel besmirched by it, and worse, I feel that continuing to be active in the Church somehow makes me guilty by association as if I support the evils that are being done. The Church is making it very hard indeed to be a Catholic today. I realise you will be getting loads of criticism in this courageous process of inviting comment. I think it is more useful to provide thoughts about rectification for the future, if there is one. I learned as a child that what we called the sacrament of Confession had 4 parts—Confession, Contrition, Absolution and Atonement. I think the Church would do well to undertake all of these stages itself, in a humble and totally public way. Absolution will be the hardest to achieve as the Church really cannot confer that upon itself. But the other three elements need to be there in full force and right now. To discern what will serve as atonement will take a real, difficult and honest effort. It will be hard, and embarrassing, but that is the least that is required if there is to be a future for the Church. Associated issues to the abuse problem may be found in the all-male structures of the Church, especially decision-making elements. This is a guaranteed way of perpetuating the gross imbalance that has been there for centuries. To find a balanced view of the world, of what is right and wrong, and of how to relate effectively to people so that healing can commence requires a 'whole world' view. That can only be achieved by being inclusive of all parts of society. The state of the Church and its patent failure to see itself as it is seen from outside reminds me of the utter breakdown of some of our Indigenous communities, which has also led to appalling abuse of innocent children. This tragedy has been blamed in large measure on the collapse of Indigenous culture, caused by 200 years of destruction of the mainstays of Indigenous life. What can the Church blame for its similar, unforgivable failures? The culture of secrecy has got to go. There should be nothing to be afraid of in the light of day. That does not mean that there cannot be privacy. But it does mean that all actions need to be scrutinised and all levels of clergy need to be made accountable and held responsible for their actions. It has been with sadness that I have heard Pope Francis blame the devil for the accusations of abuse, and apparently, also for the perpetration of abuse. That is not helpful. Everyone must take responsibility for their actions, and not seek to blame an intangible figure such as the devil. That seems like a cop out. I think the Church needs an external body in place to keep it honest, such as an integrity commission. Best wishes.

I think God is asking Catholics in Australia to come back to the Church and to make the Church their own again. I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to help move the Church forward with new ideas, ways of being and celebrating our faith with solutions and models for the rest of the world. I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to help to heal the Church and our Mother Earth that is suffering in so many ways from religious persecution, overexploitation of resources, environmental degradation, the destruction of habitat, and a perceived lack of compassion towards people in the Church who feel alienated for whatever reason that might be. I think God is asking each and everyone one of the laity, and especially women in the Church, that now is the time to become involved at every level, to give back to our communities, to heal the pain and suffering of the Australians, especially our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters. I think God is asking us to listen more deeply to the hurt of our estranged Brothers and Sisters who no longer wish to worship or can't with us at the altar. I think God is asking us to think deeply, Pray even more deeply and meditate on the goodness that we have within each and everyone one of us. I think God is asking of us in Australia to show the world how to care for one

another in our unique melting pot of a nation where we continue to work to help refugees, the homeless, the sick, the dying, our rapidly ageing population, and our young people who are disconnected from family, community and faith. I think God is asking us in Australia to work hard to promote Interfaith Dialogue and Understanding in Australia and around the world; and, to make our own Faith practices and beliefs more widely understood by non-Catholics and the secular world. I think God is asking us to help fashion a Church of the future where the contributions of all genders are welcome and cherished. God is asking us to promote women and use their compassionate understanding and caring natures to spread the love of God in our communities across our wide brown land in various leadership roles. I think God is asking us to forgive one another and to welcome the outcast, the Divorced and make it publically know that no one is prohibited from worshipping with us, that we're not exclusive, but inclusive of all. I think God is asking us in Australia to spread the word that we welcome with open arms all Catholics who feel estranged due to Divorce, separation, remarriage. I think God is asking us in Australia create Deacon Positions for women who are willing and able to work in those ministry positions. I think God is asking us to consider a more compassionate approach to the pressures and isolation of priestly celibacy and to allow priests to marry.

God is asking us to stay strong amid attacks on the Church and Christian values being eroded in our society.

To return to authentic Catholic teaching not individual priests personal opinions, which often are at odds with Catholic teaching. I think God is wanting 'hungry for the truth Australian Catholics' to be taught those moral truths, by our bishops, priests, nuns, brothers, Catholic educators. Catholic Education institutions in Australia are particularly lacking. The percentage of Catholic students who practice their faith after leaving school is dismal, somewhere between 1-2 %. That's scandalous. A few moral issues being put forward as needing the Church to fall in line with current society standards are: gay marriage to be legitimized within the Church by marrying or blessing the unions, legitimizing gay lifestyles, married priests, female priests, divorced and not validly remarried couples being able to receive Holy Communion etc. These are grave moral issues which can lead the sinner away from heaven. It's the Church's serious obligation to lead these people with the truth to freedom. To legitimize these sins is a terrible thing to do. The Church is supposed to be a moral beacon shining its light in a degenerate world regardless of the sins of individuals within the priesthood. The Church has always protected human sexuality and marriage, now I feel the Church is being eroded by bad leadership and we are heading down a path of being very close to Protestantism. I think God wants the Catholic Church to call sin, sin, and help guide these people out of their sins rather than being inclusive and helping them feel comfortable within those serious sins. The Church's job is to help sinners get to heaven and that cannot happen by legitimizing their sins. Abortion, artificial birth control, divorce and remarriage without annulment, euthanasia, homosexuality etc. do not cease to be serious sins just because the Church, for some reason, has gone soft on articulating the seriousness of them. The liberals within the Church have had decades to weaken the Church and it has failed miserably as evidenced by low priestly numbers and low Mass attendance, Catholic families limited to two children etc. Time for a return to authentic Church teaching, as given by God through the Holy Spirit. Liberalism has failed to destroy the Church completely. There are enough remnants left to try the conservative

way from here forward. You may find when the Church starts re-teaching the hard moral issues, the pews may fill again. To lower the Church's standards to that of the moral decay of today, is the absolute wrong way to go. If the Church legitimizes homosexual unions, my vision is one of Sodom and Gomorrah, aided by the Church. It's anti-God and anti-Catholic Church. Satan would be clapping his hands about the real possibility of that scenario and also the disrespect shown to his body and blood by people living in irregular marriages, receiving him by the sacrament.

God is asking that all humans are given the same opportunities to live by their faith and respond to their calling. God is asking us to re-evaluate our values and assumptions, to rethink them and ask ourselves: are they right? Are all humans given the same opportunities in Australia? Are Aboriginal, Asian, White, female and male Australians all given equitable opportunities? What does Catholic teaching say about it? Is it right? Is there scope for improvement? For change? God is also asking that we make part of our lives areas that speak to the heart: such as music—real music, that inspires ethical values and prompts human flourishing. What is the value of music education in our society? God asks that we take the time in schools to teach values to our young. Music and art speak in ways that cannot be reached through words. In a time when everything is seen as a commodity, God is asking us to hold music as a precious and sacred gift. Instil music education in the hearts and minds of school principals and leaders so that it can be given the priority it deserves for the betterment of society.

I believe God is calling us to a new model of Church. The primary action of the Church should be to create strong, faithful communities of Catholics who love God, who worship and receive the sacraments weekly, and who are continually growing in discipleship. The current model of that is the parish model. It is clear that, other than a few exceptions, the parish model is not working. A review of parishes would find rotating priests, lacklustre music, a dwindling youth ministry with ever-changing or non-existent youth leaders, a few passionate people, but not enough to create a valuable and uplifting Sunday Mass experience week-after-week. Granted, there are many parishes with beautiful communities of people that love each-other—but without an incredible encounter with Jesus at Mass every Sunday our Church cannot be all that she is called to be. It is as if the Church has 50 eggs trying to put them across 100 baskets. Parishes have largely become not faith communities but service providers of the sacraments—doing the same thing year in year out for an ever dwindling audience (seasonally bolstered by families wanting their kids to go to a Catholic school). Parishes are in maintenance mode, ticking the boxes that need to be done. Incremental change will NOT fix the issues of a dying Church. Bold, visionary action must be taken to create Catholic communities that are alive, creative and working toward a purpose. They need momentum from a critical Mass of young people, families and seniors who are not just 'tick the box' Sunday Catholics, but who are living their lives following Jesus. We need the Church to invest heavily in what could be called Independent Catholic Churches. If we capitalise on already-thriving Catholic communities by purchasing or bequeathing property, investing generously into staffing, pursuing the best in resourcing for venue tech, music, visuals, marketing and assigning our best priests—one-by-one we can actively pursue creating the next generation of Catholic Churches in Australia. There are thriving Catholic communities all over Australia, that have a strong sense of purpose, with passionate people who are led by visionary leaders who love the God and love the Church. Archdiocese should be looking to these thriving communities and orders to bring about

the next model of Church by heavily-investing in their growth and legitimising their ability to create Churches that function totally as a Catholic Church. We need to be seed-funding communities with generous investment and clear outcomes, planning for a future where they build Church communities that are large and healthy enough to self-sustain from tithing and ministry. Pursuing a model of Independent Catholic Churches would be an expensive, but fundamentally future-changing endeavour.

To return to authentic Catholic faith and moral teaching.

I think God is asking our Church to be more directly responsive to the needs of families in the busyness of family life. I would like to see the clerical Church seek ways to engage the laity as equals in decision making. We, as Church need renewal and reformation to better guide the community to strengthen their belief and participation in the 21st Century. It does not mean abandoning the foundations of our beliefs but it requires a leadership model that is horizontal not hierarchical. The laity need to be instruments of restoration to counter balance the perception of cover up which leads to mistrust and a power imbalance. I believe that God is asking us to renew our social justice commitment to love and protect the poor, the dis-empowered and the marginalized. This was the Commandment given to us by Jesus. I do not believe that the Holy Spirit accepts, that in order to do this we need a wealthy Church which is reluctant to share its vast resources. There is a chasm between the Church and the laity in their expectations of what it means to be Catholic in a modern secular society. This chasm is widening rapidly while we discuss the rhetoric. We need decisive action now, not in the future. We need to make the Church relevant and responsive to the needs of the youth. They are our future and unless we hear them by actively listening to them they will not look to the Church for guidance. The Church as we know it must change or I believe it will become obsolete in the First World. Youth do not appear to bind themselves to Church through guilt or the need for grace. If we believe that the Spirit speaks through the people, then let's embrace the change with love and hopefulness.

I feel God is calling us to a simple faith. A renewing of the simple faith that humans have in God and a trust that God is With us and will always be there for us.

To be open to all people. We need to open our windows and doors wider. Stop the rules that are man-made and have nothing to do with love of God and neighbour. Welcome back our priests who are human and fallen in love. We have the priests they are not allowed to do their job for which they have been called by God. Get rid of the Cardinals and bishops and allow others to occupy their positions. Men have not done a very good job of overseeing the Church. Open the priesthood to women and married people. The abuse would not have been allowed to continue if the hierarchy was not all male.

To love God and love our neighbour. The Church has completely lost its way. The abuse scandals haven't even touched the hierarchy. How can you have a Bishops' conference on sex abuse and not include victims? You need to feel their pain, you need to look them in the eyes and say you believe them. For God's sake sell the Church properties and all its assets to compensate the victims. Acknowledge not only the pain of the victims but also the pain of Catholics and the good priests. Until that happens, our Church attendance will keep diminishing

Get rid of clericalism. The Church needs to get real regarding sexuality. We are a sensory people. The Church has never discussed sex openly. The bishops who moved predators to other parishes to molest other boys should be charged with aiding and abetting crime. This has to stop. Lack of transparency of the cardinals and bishops caused the abuse to flourish. Name the lack of transparency and change the culture.

I believe God is asking all Catholics to be baptised in the Holy Spirit as what Pope Francis has encouraged all Catholics to do.

- To revitalize our faith through the following: 1) attracting young people to the Church by modernizing liturgy (e.g. Hillsong approach). I believe you can still provide liturgically correct liturgy that is vibrant, uplifting, teaches our faith and provides young people in particular, with an experience of God. Music is a way to reach the young. 2) Actively promote the Catholic Church through marketing and media. The Church needs to admit it's done some wrong in the past but also show all the good it does. Market to people who are searching in life and those who have left the Church (i.e. Look what the Church has to offer you!!!). Market to anyone and everyone. 3) Train priests to make their homilies meaningful to the congregation. Teach us why the Church believes what it does and the beauty behind it. Help us live the Gospel in our everyday lives. Reveal to us who Jesus really is! 4) Consider allowing celibate women to become priests. 5) Revamp Catholic Education so that it teaches more about the core faith. In order for this to be done teachers need INTENSE and RIGOROUS preservice training. The majority of teachers are not confident in teaching religion and have no passion for sharing the faith. Hire passionate Catholics to come in to schools and specifically and only teach religion.

Return to the basics of a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. That means starting from Life in the Spirit Seminars for our seminarians to actively promoting baptism in the Spirit for the faithful. In our seminaries surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit is an extraordinary powerful antidote to the sex abuse scandals the Church is currently plagued with. I wish to respectfully state I do believe that many of our priests actually do not know Jesus—they know ABOUT him—but they do not have a personal relationship with him. Many of them are not tuned into the power they have by virtue of their ordained ministry, to overcome the forces of darkness.

Let me preface this by saying that as a 28-year-old married man with a young son, I am deeply concerned about the current state of the Church. I have spent the majority of my adult life living off donations and working for Catholic missionary organisations, so I trust that you will take this submission seriously, as I really do have the 'scent of the sheep' upon me. God is definitely calling the Australian Church to once again embrace the richness of authentic Catholicism. It is time for our leaders, the bishops, to apologise for their modern experiments with Church teaching and practice. He is asking us to do away with the heresy of modernism that has plagued the Church for too long and has been manifest through embracing elements of secular humanism and cultural Marxism. He is asking us to embrace proper Catholic education in the Scholastic Thomistic tradition. He is asking us to embrace worship that is not dumbed down, watered down and oversimplified so as to no longer appeal to younger adults or teenagers. The Church appears to extensively cater to the desires of those aged 60+ who still seem to be inebriated by the damaging, amoral and revolutionary spirit of the 1970s. The decline in Mass attendance is the only metric worth looking at as proof of the bad fruit produced by this generation. God is about

saving souls and so the Church needs to make clear that this is her primary aim. Catholicism has the fullness of truth. Jesus Christ founded our Church and so we must be proud of it. We must blaze a trail of influencing our culture, rather than letting it influence us, as has been the case especially since the '60s. That is the same time period when Massive numbers of Catholics abandoned the Church, and it is hard to blame them as their beautiful faith and its liturgy, music, and clear teaching became watered down and barely recognisable. When Coca-Cola came out with 'New Coke' in 1985 the business listened clearly to the disgust of consumers and stopped making the product within a week. Within 72 days 'New Coke' could no longer be found on the shelves. Yet, when half of practicing Catholics abandoned the Church after what Pope Paul VI called 'the smoke of Satan' entered it, nobody batted an eyelid. How can the point be made clearer that in order to move forward in the Church, we have to backtrack to where the current crisis began? No, I am not blaming Vatican II, nor am I rejecting it. The current problems go back far prior to that; they go back to Pope Leo XIII's warnings against Socialism and Freemasonry—and we have proof of Communists and Freemasons infiltrating our seminaries in the early 20th century. They are the reason for our current confusion and crisis. They are the reason that there are far too many active homosexuals in the clergy. The Australian Laity need an apology for being subjected false teaching and ugly liturgy. We need a return to counter-cultural tradition in liturgy, music, evangelisation and education.

The world is becoming aggressively anti-Christian in the way it legislates public morality and is even policing so-called "hate" speech or "thought" crime in many countries. Gender fluidity and antifamily laws are on the increase, seemingly being organised from UN down to local country levels. Australia is not immune and is Christian speech and thought is being forced into silence. Wars have not ceased nor persecution of the Catholic Church and Christians. Please request the Pope and all the bishops to stand firm in the face of these trials and give clear courageous teachings. Please ask Pope Francis and the bishops to repeat the consecration of Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as requested at Fatima. It can do them no harm to carry out this request, and I believe it will do the world a lot of good.

God is asking us to remember our place and our purpose. This can be seen through remembering it is God's place to judge, not ours. We must all be reminded to reflect and discern within ourselves the path we must walk in order to bring glory to God. In this, we must also grow to accept that each person has their own convictions and beliefs about how to love and honour God through the way they live. God would rather see us joined in union, all with a commonality of love, kindness, hope and faith even if we are loving him in different and imperfect ways. This isn't just about accepting that others are living in 'sin', but accepting that we cannot truly judge what is 'sin.' God is asking us to be a Church of the world, not a brick building that we visit each weekend. We must invest in creating more opportunities to make being a Catholic more than just an identity, but a way of life. This could be seen as hosting sports competitions (for example 'Churches Soccer'), eisteddfods, bands, markets, music festivals—this fosters fellowship and service amongst Catholics along with promoting entry into evangelization within our communities. This model can be seen throughout many Christian Churches that build gyms and recreation centres that are open to all in the community. Finally, God is asking us to stay true to our vocations and the role of vocations (particularly religious and ordained) within the Church. There

is something so humbling about being a part of a community lead by a man who has given up his life, the opportunity for a biological family, to love a family of strangers. This sort of love for God and parish is very rare and very special and is something that should be valued and promoted. And it's this sort of love that will turn around the direction of the Church and bring it back to its purpose of being a community that promotes each and every human to love, be kind, hopeful and filled with faith.

Evangelise and inspire through a reinvigorated liturgy, that would be substantially underpinned a higher standard of liturgical music. Trained musicians should be hired and paid professional rates to prepare and train community and congregational choirs and instrumental groups, and churches should be equipped with a higher standard of instruments and audio equipment.

I believe that we are being challenged regarding our sense of community. The general noise/media/information around us continually bombards us with stories of partisanship; partisanship politically, or on the basis of gender, socioeconomic status, race, or religious belief. We are given stories where there are only binary oppositional outcomes or perspectives communicated as though this is the 'norm' within our society. Within our ministry of Catholic education, we are working on communicating and living Gospel values and guiding our students to embody the teachings of Jesus. It is concerning that perhaps, whilst ritual and knowledge are part of the community of school, this is not entirely transferred into the lives of students outside or beyond their schooling experience. True evangelisation is something of a pipe-dream in some contexts; perhaps there may be issues of student personal or spiritual investment in liturgy. For millennia, music has been at the centre of Catholic liturgy. Music supports the ritual of the Church. Music brings the community together to share the Eucharist. Music provides the common language across the universal Church where the wonders of faith and the story of Jesus Christ may be shared and celebrated together. Music is a powerful tool for evangelisation. We are being challenged to create community. Assisting our parishes and schools through developing their ability to commune and pray together through music is vital in ensuring the vibrancy of our community into the future.

The question as presented is...what is God asking of the Church in Australia? I have attended two listening sessions and I was very disappointed with the responses of the other attendees. What I heard was a social justice warrior's wish list of what THEY wanted for the Church. Maybe the organizers of the plenary council should remind everybody of what the actual question is ... that is ... what is God asking of the Church in Australia? The simple answer is that God is asking what He has always asked of His Church. ... Be Holy as I am Holy. Nothing more nothing less. He is NOT asking for women priests, gay marriage, gay priests, transgender priests or anything else that is currently fashionable. We have only begun to see the tip of the ice berg as far as sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults continues to emerge. None of this scandal would have occurred if the Church had pursued holiness instead of following the latest trends in political correctness. I am trying to remain positive about the plenary council but I have this nagging fear that it will be hijacked and used as a vehicle to further corrupt the Church. I pray that it will not happen.

God is asking the Catholic Church in Australia to address the issue of proper celebration of the liturgy and liturgical abuses. This is discussed in great detail in my submission.

<p>A warmer, more welcoming Church, where all members encouraged (not forced) to be involved and help out. Acceptance is key.</p>
<p>To intentionally listen to his people, so that it may respond with extravagant mission, ministry, and love.</p>
<p>Asking to be open mind to receive people offering comfortable time in His house—at the Church. Songs and homily in a simple way that make people to reflect about life, bringing the lesson from the Bible to the day that we are living.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking the Australian Catholic Church to become relevant for the lives of people in the 21st century. This needs leadership at all levels in the Catholic Church if the Church wishes to continue as a viable religious group in Australia. This will involve significant change to the way in which priests and all clerical leaders in the Australian Church are trained and carry out their ministry. It also means that outdated Catholic Church rules will need to change, in particular the Church needs to recognise the role of women in the Church and their role in ministry and support services including the possibility of women priests. Radical changes are needed to regain some integrity and trust in the Australian Catholic Church by making celibacy optional for male priests. It would be much better for Australian Catholics to have Australian born priests who are married men or women who understand our culture that importing priests from overseas countries as seems to be the trend to fill vacancies in many parishes. This is not sustainable or culturally appropriate. I think God is asking us to be good people who live our lives using the good values we were taught. To do this within a Catholic faith today in Australia is very difficult because of lack of trust we now have in our Church leaders, the stigma they have cast onto ordinary everyday Catholics and their total lack of understanding of psychosocial norms of life.</p>
<p>I expect a friendlier Church, more welcoming and more receptive or closer to the community.</p>
<p>God is asking us to come back to the heart of the Church, that is Jesus. For too long we have been caught up in the Church as institution and lost sight of our real mission. A more pastoral approach is needed from the clergy to meet people where they are in life, as Jesus would without judgement. The Church needs to be more welcoming to all people—divorced, homosexual, and the list goes on. I have heard countless stories of people being turned away from the Church—for example, a priest declining baptism of a child. Families declined to continue in a sacramental program because they miss one meeting. Social justice must be at the heart of the Church and not an option that some people do this work. This must permeate all areas of Church life—Mass, school life, seminary formation, leadership, lay people. A greater role of young people in the life of the Church is needed to engage them at a younger age to feel empowered and to support building a Church that supports the needs of people in this day, for they will be the future of the Church. The Church cannot stand still and not make changes to reflect the changing times. Bold decisions are needed. Greater involvement of lay people in Church leadership is required and this includes the role of women. The falling number of priests calls for exploration of married priests.</p>
<p>Embracing the love of Jesus; continuing our growth into mature discipleship that as Australians we become more accepting, welcoming, forgiving, encountering both likeness and diversity.</p>

Spirituality Religion is changing for younger people. They are all searching for Spirituality and truth now. How to make the Church more relevant to the youth of today? How do you intend to engage the younger generations in the Church community? Increase attendance at Church/involvement in Catholic community initiatives? How can we encourage young people to become people of Catholic faith? Keep up with those changes to ensure the young people of today stay involved in their faith Need to attract more young people into the Church with lighter more meaningful services and make the music more appealing but that doesn't mean sing everything in the Mass / liturgy. Contemporary Issues What direction for women as priests and senior leaders in 2020? How will the Church move forward with the lack of priests? Is there room for married clergy? Will clergy ever be able to marry? Will women ever be ordained as priests? Why don't we have women as priests? Some of Jesus' greatest and most loyal followers were women. This is a man-made rule, from patriarchal times, that needs to be changed.

The makeup of the clergy moving forward:

- Women
- Married men
- Welcome back ex-priests
- Make celibacy a choice
- Gay people.

A contemporary Church

- I believe we need to consider the leadership by influential figures in our institutions e.g. politics, industry and in our spiritual leaders
- A more in touch Church is needed considering contemporary times and lives of Catholics.
- Liturgy—How does the Church intend to use ICT's as a medium for creating positive spiritual growth in the community? Betrayals—trust is broken. How to deal with, recover and respond to the George Pell events? How will the past/present damage to the Catholic Church be repaired? Patience; understanding; tolerance; and justice How can they / we renew the faith of the communities after the recent allegations of sexual abuse? Will the Church begin to actively and positively address issues raised by victims of sexual abuse? Mission—Looking at some of the beliefs which are out of contact with society today—divorce, same sex marriage, contraception. The Church is on its knees. Not relevant, not real, out of step with society. How is the Church going to change with the times? Life is moving forward and changing fast—how does the Church plan to? How is the culture of the Church going to change? Are all voices going to be listened to? Outreach God: To be a welcoming people, who show compassion and empathy to others, especially refugees and those marginalised, abused etc. Patience, kindness and empathy for our neighbours all around the world who need our love, support and encouragement to become one loving world. Need to do more across different Churches and share celebrations not just Christmas. Recognition inspirations/ influences of other faiths, To share the blessings that we are fortunate to have with those less fortunate • Asylum seekers • Disabled / disadvantaged etc. Accountability—Need to be...

That we provide a platform for the older members of our Church so that they feel included and valued as lifelong members of their local worshipping community. In parishes it is often the youth that are the main focus and rightly so as they are the future of the Church but the older members also have so much to offer.

WWJD "What would Jesus do?" This sticker challenged us to consider us when we do not think as God thinks. We ask forgiveness for offending God when He knows us too well and is just disappointed. In our community, we have seen the anger and rage associated with the child abuse problem and we just talk. I think the Council should set up a "Month of Spiritual Reparation" wherein the clergy/religious should, on a daily basis, within parishes, spend 3 hours in the morning and same in the afternoon/evening in prayer before the Eucharist each day of the month (excluding Sundays). In this way, the community can see that the clergy and the Church is suffering over these and other wrongs (perceived indifference etc.) and making a serious atonement. The Church has been seriously damaged in its reputation; its ability to fund its ongoing mission and where we once saw skepticism of our faith, we now see the devil gaining ground and more souls denying Christ and therefore risking their eternal soul. We must ask "WWJD?" We were known for love and faith and that must be regained. I believe the clergy will only gain this with the help of the laity. As a Secular Franciscan, I note that there are more saints/blessed etc. from this lay Order than the "First" and "Second" Orders combined. The laity have a lot to offer and frankly, in recent decades, they have simply been seen as a source of funds or cheap labour. Priests, particularly when engaged as a spiritual assistant, have become paternalistic to the extent that they might see Christ in themselves but don't necessarily look too hard at seeing Christ in others. Here is an area of spiritual renewal priests can engage in. There must be a period of communal 'suffering' and renewal whereby the trust that has been lost by priests can be regained. This will be done where there is genuine regret for these weaknesses, not just words, as voiced by the clergy during these hours (refer above) and at the same time, a forgiveness by the laity, resulting in a visual re-embracing of the clergy with the Catholic community, and for all the world to see. Priests and anyone with an addiction/weakness can be introduced to daily Rosary, as our mother Mary is a great source of graces, particularly when reflecting on the wounds of Our Lord and in concert with prayer to the Archangel Michael to drive demons away.

To bring the message of Christ to the world by a living encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. While being a gift from God, the Catholic faith is eminently reasonable. Provide a means of catechesis to promote this, which is attractive to all beginning with the baptised faithful of the Catholic Church, and reaching ordinary people in all walks of life. Emphasising the role of the laity in promoting the faith to the world. Providing a means for the laity to obtain a deep knowledge of the Faith. Having pastors who strive to live holiness in their everyday lives. Bringing the message that the Church is the people of God and not a bureaucratic organisation. Bringing hope to this fallen world by living joyfully our duty of state and commands of Christ. Promotion of the family modelled on the Holy Family, as the basis for a thriving society. Educating young people that true happiness lies in keeping themselves chaste for Christ, and their future spouse. Providing a means to employ Principals and Teachers of Catholic schools who live deeply Christian lives and promote the true teaching of the faith. Throw wide the doors of the Church by making more freely

available it's rich resources including the writings of the Church Fathers, Papal Encyclicals, publications of St Thomas Aquinas and so on. Making it easier for the working people to receive the sacraments during each day of the week (including Monday), particularly the Eucharist at Holy Mass and Confession.

To love one another. Look after those who don't have enough to eat, or a house, or shoes, or peace, or someone to talk to. God is asking us to be his hands on earth. He is asking us to be the body of Christ, and to invite people to experience the body of Christ with us. He asks us to seek wisdom and be humble and to recognise when we have been wrong, and mean and stingy and brutal and exclusive and unkind and say sorry. God asks us to be generous. God asks us to be united and not splintered.

I think God wants a more inclusive, welcoming and warm Church. A Church that promotes opportunities to integrate their members, that provides opportunities to understand, get to know and experience God's love. I think that a community that works, learns and grows together gets stronger and their members look after each other too. In our [-] community we have a few things that we do and have been working very well:

- Every Mass we welcome the newcomers and invite everyone for a snack (usually a hot dog with refreshments) after Mass, where we can talk and get to know each other.

- Music plays a big part in our Mass. Most of the Mass is sung and the participation of the community is encouraged. Keys of the songs are chosen in a way that people feel more comfortable to sing together. A more informal approach, where people feel comfortable to join and sing/clap too.

- We have a "whatsapp" group, which everyone can join if they wish to (we have a "welcoming team", which people can see and leave their phone number to be added to the group). In this group, our priest sends every day a voice message, reading the gospel of the day. We also exchange videos and information about our faith, ask for prayers if anyone is going through a tough time/sickness, etc.

- Once a month, we have a "prayer group", with a specific theme for each encounter (we share information about the topic and can share personal experiences too, if relevant to the theme).

- The men in the group meet once a month to pray the rosary together.

- The women in the group meet once a month to talk about the women in the Bible and their examples.

- We have organised teams to share tasks/responsibilities: welcoming, kitchen/food, liturgy, music, etc. I find that when people share their faith, get to know each other and work together as a group, they feel stronger and happier in their faith. I feel that most Masses I've been to in Australia feel very cold, distant, as if it was more a matter of following a protocol rather than experiencing and celebrating God. The community doesn't get involved, doesn't participate and I'm afraid they might not even feel comfortable to do so. Many times, that sort of environment depends a lot on how the priest interacts with the community. If the priest seems to be merely reciting prayers and going through a protocol, how can he be an example to inspire people? People seem to more and more just mind their own business. Even for the "sign of peace",

sometimes people just nod (don't even shake hands!!). I believe that less formality and more warmth is the way to engage the community and make them feel alive, ready to praise God and open up to His grace.

Looking after the young people, especially teenagers. We need to keep them away from drugs, building up their values and beliefs. Would be good to engage them in social activities with people in vulnerable situation, as this helps to develop gratitude and compassion for others. They need to be aware how lucky they are to live in a safe country and take advantage of this to make world a better place.

God is asking us to be a charitable community and Church. Not only to help through prayer but also through action.

I think that God is asking the bishops to pray and discern a new expression of priestly ministry in Australia. I provide a proposal to this end in my attached document entitled: 'Viri probati, a proposal with the view to maintain celibacy as the norm'.

I feel that God is asking of the Church in Australia to recommit to the being One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church that we are all called to be a part of One, in the sense of working, at personal, parish, diocese and (in particular) national and universal levels, towards union with our Protestant and Orthodox brothers and sisters. I feel this call to be One is needed to be heard anew within our own Catholic Church, where I have commonly seen disunity and lack of compassion between certain circles (the plenary youth speak Facebook group is the perfect example of this). Holy, in the sense of ensuring we, both as individuals and as a Church, are following in the ways of Jesus Christ and are ever attentive and docile to the prodding of the Holy Spirit. Catholic, in the sense of being a universal Church that welcomes and invites all. I especially feel the Australian Church is being asked by God to ensure we are universal to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who, by virtue of the suffering they have endured and still do endure, should have a strong ownership of the Church. I also feel being a universal Church includes formation and accompaniment of all the Baptised so that they may know the universal nature of the Church to which they are a part of. Apostolic, in the sense of being able to boldly affirm and proclaim our apostolic roots that are still, and always will be, a huge source of life in the Church. I also feel that we are being called to be an Apostolic Church in the other sense of the word apostle, one who is sent. Sent to the poor, the unloved and those who do not know the transformational and beautiful power of the personal living God, Jesus Christ. I also feel that that Church is being called to recommit to these four, timeless marks of the Church in a way that is perfectly One, perfectly Holy, perfectly Catholic and perfectly Apostolic. I do not use the word perfect into the sense of a final resting place where nothing more is needed, I feel the Church is being called to the complete opposite, to be a Church that is continuously moving towards the Kingdom of God. As Blessed (soon to be Saint) John Henry Newman once wrote, "In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below, to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." This is the perfection that I feel God is calling the Australian Church to, just as Christ, too, has called us "to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt 5:48)

Be more socially aware—care for poor, hungry, prisoners etc., not only for Australians but those overseas. Do this at the parish level as well as through Centacare—e.g. adopt an overseas parish,

have local accommodation, showers and lunches for homeless. Be more aware of those who do not attend Church and try to reach out to these people—use the school community perhaps. Invest in research in technology that makes natural family planning more accurate.

To provide a place where everyone feels welcome and caters for all age groups. I truly believe more needs to be done to entice and engage the children and young people. The basic traditions on which the Church are founded need to remain but new ways need to be incorporated for the young people to want to attend Mass and continue their faith journey. Many young people are being lost to other beliefs (mystical, fundamentalists and the like) because they are searching for something and not finding it in the Catholic Church. Something also needs to be done to encourage young Australian men to join the priesthood. Maybe we need to return to the 'old' ways and let priests be married. Having priests from other countries (e.g. India, Africa) is not beneficial to the Australian Church as these people have their own cultures and try to speak to Australians in the way that they would in their country of origin and the cultural difference is not always appealing. Also many of these priests are hard to understand due to their inability to speak the English language correctly. Priests should also have to learn public speaking as part of their training. Sermons need to be short and to the point and delivered in a way that encourages you to listen. A well delivered and inspiring speech is what is needed. It would be good to see children learning about the sacraments returned into schools as part of the Catholic education. Also would be good to see more priest involvement in the Catholic schools that are in the same area as their Church.

God is asking us to be authentic in our faith. To hold on to the truths of our Church. To never water down our rich and beautiful faith. To ensure that the sacraments and most importantly the Eucharist are the centre of our faith. God wants us to recognise His Son in the Eucharist and to run to Him. God wants us to be EVERYDAY Christians and to share His love with everyone we meet and everyone we encounter. God desires us to share the truth in love, always! God wants us to understand His love for us. He wants to be a central part of each person's life, not just an add-on or an afterthought or a 'if time permits'. God desires a personal relationship with us. God wants us to help all people but I feel in particularly the young to truly know Him and understand His Church and all its richness. I think this should start in the home (parents NEED formation) and flow into our Churches and Catholic schools. God is asking us to pray. To pray for our world and for each person in it. God is asking us to protect the beauty of marriage and family life. To recognise that marriage is between one man and one woman for life and that the purpose of marriage is procreation—to be a reflection of God's love.

To do the best to support the people of Australia whether it be nationwide or just in our local community especially in a time when so many Australians are in need of care and support.

Take care of the weak, poor, rejected and lonely. Pray. Back to basics in everyday life of living the Gospel. Be humble and forgiving. Be grateful. Listen openly. See Jesus in each other and treat each other with love. Spread the joy beyond the Year of Youth. Work together as different genders respectfully, making decisions together and sharing wisdom. Change with the times in practical ways, female and married clergy. Grow with accountability, authenticity and integrity. Make our faith relevant.

1. An Australian Church which develops a culture of shared decision making including women and people from all backgrounds. This will be supported by appropriate structures and ongoing training and development for all. It will be a Church that presents itself in a much simpler and direct way—a simplicity that will be seen in dress, titles, structures... 2. Our core teachings—a new catechism (?)—will be reframed using advances in science as a basis to replace the narrow and restrictive interpretation of our current "theology". It will have its foundations in our sacred myths that have been set free from a stifling literalism. 3. A Church that trains and supports a wide variety of ministers and ministries. This will include ordained men who have married and women (at least as deacons). 4. A Church that engages in open and ongoing dialogue with all people of good will from all faiths and none—a Church that does not retreat to formulaic answers in the public square. An example of this might be with people from the LGBTIQ communities and others.

Lessons that are fun, like games. Always be kind and nice. Pray each day. Forgive and forget help each other. Be grateful to family and friends. Care for the environment. Keep the world safe. Look after those who have less. To love ourselves. Be joyful and positive. Look after our families. Be authentic. Be creative. To always love and cherish each other. Follow Jesus more closely. Always try hard. To make peace in the world. Be your own unique person. Be inclusive. Never give up. Read the Bible more. Go to Mass more. Be fair and just. For children to be part of Church discussions. Welcome different cultures. Pray every day. Stand up for what is right. Visit the imprisoned.

To foster the Christian way of life throughout the Nation and be committed to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ based on faith, hope, charity and compassion. Catholics/parishioners to become involved and support the Church and Clergy to build a fraternal community focused Church.

1. Make faith relevant to the younger generation. Embrace the wonderful way that Catholic schools make faith relevant to the next generation. Encourage better support of the Catholic schools by the parish. Provide alternative liturgies, celebrations, gathering to attract and be spiritually meaningful to the young. Ensure the parish supports rather than hinders them. Catholic school get the young into the Church!!! 2. To support our genuine, embattled priests and bishops by removing clericalism from the Catholic Church. Structure needs to be dominated by elected laity with religious concentrating on pastoral care and God's love. 3. Immediately open the priesthood, bishop, cardinal positions to married priests, Deacons, former priests, and particularly women. Watch Q&A TV show from 4 March 2019 which reflects how many Catholics want clericalism changed and are having faith severely tested. Ensure the pope sees a copy of the program. Rules around woman not being priests during Jesus time reflects the society of the time—the Bible does not say this and the Bible should be interpreted in the context of the time it was written. 4. Temporarily suspend from parish and schools any religious accused of interfering sexually with minors and report to police for investigation; this includes confessions. They can be reinstated if cleared. 5. Stop making rules for what women do with their bodies, including contraception. Move into the present with family planning for wanted and loved children. 6. Stop preaching sex as being only for procreation when God gave it to us as a gift between couples. 7. Support and embrace LGBT peoples fully into the love of God and allow them to marry in God's

Church. Don't call them "lost sheep to bring into our flock" as per the Archbishop of [-]'s address to all the parishes about gay and lesbian couple (2017 or 2018?). This was disgraceful, condescending and totally inconsistent with Jesus' teachings. 8. Don't hide behind man-made Canon Law but ask for urgent change from the Pope now. If change does not come from the Vatican, then some of it MUST be ignored to bring about urgent change at least in Australia. Pope Francis called us to be a "Church of faith-filled people who speak boldly and with passion". The Spirit working through the laity will support you. 9. Embrace change. Our bishops and the Pope are being too tentative on change, worried negative reaction from the flock or saving face on previous decisions. If some hard decisions are not made now then more will leave an anarchic and out of touch Church. The good/progression priests out that are being stifled. 10. Get permission now for laity to be at least half women of the Plenary Council. If not forthcoming make the bold decision now or else you will have no credibility in the diminishing flock.

I think that God is asking of us at this time to do what Jesus asked of us at the ascension—to go and make disciples of the nations. To encounter others where they 'are at' in their lives and witness to God's love and salvation. To achieve this, I think the Church needs to become more welcoming and inclusive to all people and treasure them as the children of our God that they are. I believe that instead of fostering a culture of welcome and inclusivity, the Church excludes people in a number of ways but specifically in its language. The language of many of the prayers in the new missal is complex in their construction and archaic in their vocabulary. The language of the Church is often unnecessarily discriminatory (e.g. "for us men and for our salvation." in the Profession of Faith) and actively works against including potentially half its body. Likewise, the Church needs to look again at how it engages (or doesn't) with societal groups like the homosexual community. From the experiences of people I know who are homosexual, they feel utterly disenfranchised and unwelcome in Christian Churches yet there are many good people who are homosexual who long to be in community with a God who is Love and is compassionate and merciful and for whom I'm certain God bears love and compassion and mercy as he does to us all. In many ways we have recently seen the language of the Church change (e.g. 'Both lives matter' in the abortion debate) and I think that is an example where the Church is reaching out to the world with its message of justice and love but far more effectively than it has done before. I have recently been reading about the Franciscan movement and am beginning to see that perhaps a simpler, more basic, down-to-earth approach to life may be appealing for a lot of people. The reason that secular society appears to lack respect for the Church is in my view, because they don't understand the Church and many within the Church don't have a contemporary understanding of the faith and nor do they want to gain one. Time and again, I have seen highly conservative clergy and parishioners espouse as fact, opinions that seek only to reject and ridicule—not at all the behaviour exhibited by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I have heard many people bemoaning the shortage of priests here in Australia. I'd like to see this as more of an opportunity for the laity to commit themselves anew to taking some of the non-clerical tasks of a clergy who (whilst already well supported) appear overwhelmed with all that is asked of them and especially duties not directly related to their pastoral duties.

Be the Church that is open to all and objectively evident that we see Christ in everyone and everything. For me this is the real meaning of being a Christian. Ultimately God does not care

about how long the altar cloth is or whether you sit or kneel at the right time. This would be a very small God. Two simple commandments are above all others—love God and love your neighbour as yourself. We make it way too complicated for the non-Catholics and non-Christians to understand how it is that we do that. A simpler, more open Church would gain back respect as people would recognise that our God is at least as big as the whole universe—otherwise what are we doing? Our weekly Mass has turned into a dogmatic ritual which "practicing" Catholics can attend every week but not really talk to another person! How is that possible? People are hungry for community and connection and we offer set prayers, bowing and personal prayer. I'm afraid we have lost the reality of the original Church—"The Way"—the persecuted but steadfast and community-oriented group of believers.

Defend traditional teaching, faith and morals vigorously. See attached submission.

God is asking us as Catholic's to decide if we are going to be a Church of the Gospel or not. The continued passive approach of lay people is causing the Church to slowly die. God is asking the lay people to take up leadership and to live there baptismal call.

To not be lukewarm in our faith. To be unafraid to share and tell people that we are Catholic. We need to better educate ourselves so that we know how to respond to questions or criticisms about our faith. We need to spend more time in the Word (with the Bible) and really know it so that we are better able to dialogue with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters i.e. Protestants. But also for ourselves; allowing God's Word to nourish us and dispel any lies the Devil presents us with. Our priests need to make their homilies understandable and relatable because not everyone in the congregation will "get it" otherwise. The Bible was written within a certain time and cultural context so it's difficult to understand at the best of times. It doesn't help when the homily does nothing to help us understand or doesn't do an effective job of it. We have had more instances where we walked away from a Methodist service or an Evangelical service and understood an aspect of the Bible and Christian faith better and also knew how it applied to our life right now. Less so for Catholic Masses, which is a shame. I asked my sister "Why don't you go to Mass every Sunday?" To which she responded "It seems so structured like with the readings. And I don't get it. They (the priests) don't explain it very well." Our religious education in our Catholic schools need to start being unafraid and unapologetic about teaching more complex and 'meaty' theology. Why is it that we are expected to read and understand Shakespeare's poems and plays in English and study Aristotle's philosophies and works in Science but in religion we think our kids are incapable of reading, learning and studying about the works of Fulton Sheen or G.K. Chesterton or the diary of St. Faustina?

1. To recover autonomy and authority for the Catholic education establishment and honour them.
2. To make all priest and bishops, through evangelization, to fall in love with Jesus and his message.
3. To get priests to teach all of us everything that Jesus has taught to priests and bishops.
4. To get a new and fresh evangelization for priests and bishops.
5. To evangelize before any catechesis.
6. To accept and take responsibility for the great commission coming from the Gospels: Mt.28:16-20; Mc.16:14-18; Lc.24:26-39 and Jn.20:19-23.
7. To recruit real devotee teachers, faithful followers, of Jesus Christ for teaching in our Catholic schools.
8. To recruit teachers that are knowledgeable defenders and advocates of the Catholic Church.
9. To teach the Catechism of the Catholic Church to all of our bishops and priests and then to all of our children in

our Catholic schools. 10. Bishops and priest have to define and preach against sin. 'The prophet as Sentry' Eze.3:16-21 11. To call sin a sin, with courage, in order to save souls. Sin is not a weakness, is not a fault or shortcoming. 12. To teach the faithful to be sensitive to sin. 13. To denounce sin by name without fear of hurting people's feelings. Their soul is at risk. 14. To fill up the convents again with nuns well prepared and ready to evangelize our children/young people in our Catholic schools/colleges. 15. To increase confession time in every parish. 16. To teach about and promote the sacrament of Reconciliation in every parish. 17. To make available the sacrament of Reconciliation with Adoration of the Blessed sacrament. 18. To convert the Australian Catholic University in a Catholic institution. 19. To have an institution to form and prepare real and true Catholic teachers. 20. To eradicate and reject the 'individualism' as an education model and give way to a more Christian method of teaching. 21. To oppose to all forms of individualism in our Australian families/groups/ society as it promotes selfishness, pride and, worst, 'relativism'. It is the opposite of Ph.2:3 22. To denounce and stop 'Hedonism' in our families/society. 23. To promote respect from children to adults. 24. To promote good manners in our teachers. 25. To promote good manners in our children. 26. To promote a modest/non-exhibitionist dressing code in our girl/women. 27. Take the mobile phone out of our schools, out of teacher's hands and out of our children/young people's mind. 28. To reject government financial support (Billions \$\$) if the government is to take control ('safe school program') of our Catholic schools. Follow Don Bosco's example. Poverty before corruption. 29. To form faithful Christian Catholics. Our schools have good sport, music, dance, debate, fund raising and other programs and our children are good at them but they become the greatest aggressors of all. Many in the government's cabinet are "Catholics". But we have not any good Christian Catholic program that form faithful Christian Catholics.

[-]—Result of Two Listening Sessions held in November 2018—What God is asking of the Church in Australia? The young men and women of [-] overwhelmingly called for a Church that leads us in the world, strong and undeterred. The image that defined our discussion is of the Church as a lighthouse in the storm, with Christ who is truth and light penetrating the confusion and lies of the devil. To achieve this end we feel that robust formation and education in the perennial truths of the faith is a necessity. The Church must not shy away from holding strong to these truths. We expect resistance, and we expect hate. But we must all hold tight to He who promised us the kingdom when people curse and hate us all because of Him. Education merely received in preparation for the sacraments as a child is insufficient. We feel that God is calling the Church in Australia—with our patroness, that great Australian teacher, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop—to educate all her faithful from the cradle to the grave. More work is desperately needed in youth AND adult faith education. Alongside this focus on a life lived learning the faith, we feel a call to more fully realise the sacramental reality of the Church. This is primarily to be seen in a greater availability of confession, daily Mass, and adoration. Traditional and timeless practices which pick us out as uniquely Catholic—such as Eucharistic and Marian processions, and public rosaries—would aid greatly in recapturing our Catholic identity. In an age of transient identities, we and many of our peers feel at times lost in the shapeless void of post-modernism. We need a Church who speaks with clarity, and calls us to live as clear examples of Christ working through His children. This of course means there must be a sacrifice—living authentically as a Catholic in a world that has declared that "God is dead" sets us apart. We feel the need for a Church that

delivers a truth of radical love, a love that allows us to face such confusion with the gentle meekness of Christ. In a world that has forgotten what 'love' truly is, and has instead embraced ambivalence and lust, Christ's unique and unashamed message of love is more needed than ever. This love requires the truth to remain untainted, our practices to be identifiably Catholic, and our actions to be always in the service of others. When this happens the great beauty of the Church, in her liturgical and architectural traditions especially, can shine as a beacon for all to see. God is calling the Church in Australia to not hide the light of faith under a bushel, but to hold it forth for all the world to see. In Christ, The young men and women of [-].

I think he is asking to go more deeply in his word. The most of Catholics don't know nothing about the Church history, moreover the most of Catholics cannot see Jesus, don't believe from heart, we just love that one who we know. Every single Catholic Church should have group of prayer, study Bible every week for all ages. Also the Church is closed all the time, just open in service time, it should be open all day is the house of my father, sometimes I'm upset and just want stay with Jesus and the Church is closed so I sit down outside and pray in the street. Well to conclude I think every single Catholic should start reading, studying the Bible, Jesus is coming back and the most of us will be sleeping at the time. So Church wake and study about the word of God. This is the principle before doing anything else. Thank you for asking, thank you for being interested in our opinion. Praying for good changes. We are sick to hearing about so many scandals about priest, bishop and Catholics representatives. We need the truer Church. The Church that Jesus resigned to Peter. God bless you all. Thanks!

After much prayer and attending a couple of listening and dialogue sessions, I think God is asking the Australian Church to rediscover and understand our identity as the Church and as co-heirs to the Kingdom. My biggest holy discontent that the Spirit keeps bringing up for me is the unfortunate fact that we, as a Church, no longer understand our missionary identity. Too many people (young and young at heart) sit in our pews on Sundays who live lives where the only visible sign of their Catholic identity is that single hour on Sunday. Too many people on our pews have a faith that has not yet been fully realised through encounter and relationship, and many perhaps have not had the formation or the opportunities to bring that faith out into the world. I believe this all stems from a lack of understanding of our baptismal call to mission, and what it means to be anointed as priest, prophet and king; which in and of itself stems from a poor prayer life. Missionary disciples who know how to spend time with the Lord, who seek to understand His heart and His mission for the world, who put Him at the centre of their lives, who seek to understand their identity and purpose in and through Him, and who consult Him first and foremost in all that they say and do, will inevitably bear such visible and abundant fruit in their lives that service and evangelisation will naturally pour out of them. Their understanding of the Father's inexhaustible Love will naturally manifest a thirst for holiness—increasing the thirst to be better formed in the beliefs and traditions of the Catholic Church and how to will the good of the other. "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference." (Elie Wiesel) I feel too that God is asking us to step up. Our God deserves excellence, and for far too long, we have settled for mediocrity—mediocrity in our prayer, in our seeking of Him, in our love and service for the world, in our work, in how we deal with crises, in how we educate the future generations on the Catholic faith, in our worship and unfortunately, in how we take our faith and bring His Truth, Beauty and Goodness

outside of Church on Sundays. And this is where the laity need to be formed and equipped—whether by clergy, or fellow lay people with the support of clergy—but our Church urgently needs to learn how to first simply become a disciple, and how to foster community and help build and encourage other disciples around us. God desires more out of the Church—I am so sure His heart aches when we aren't living out our full potential as children of God, who are anointed and sent at our baptism and when we are dismissed and sent out after each Eucharist celebration. There is too much brokenness in the world that God desperately needs our cooperation to help heal.

I believe God is asking us to 'open the windows of the institutional Church and brush out the cobwebs', the way we did at Vatican II Council 60 years ago. We in Australia should lead the way in letting the renewing Spirit in again, showing the world how, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can discern a better paradigm for the way we, the real Church (laity and clergy) operate in the Great South Land. What is this new paradigm for Church in Australia? (a) It is "A New Generation of Church in the Way of Mary", as per the speech by bishop [-] (29/5/18), also in line with the writings of Francois Marc SM, who pleads for a Marian Church, one which "lives the gospel after the manner of Mary", rather than multiplying processions and blessing huge statues. This Marian-type Church is already described in *Lumen Gentium*: "...the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and the perfect union with Christ" (n.63). It is again echoed in the writings of Gerard Hall SM (e.g. in his article "Marian Spirituality of prophetic dialogue") who speaks of the three-fold task of the missionary Church as: (1) "sending out"; (2) "gathering in"; and (3) "walking with". The Church in Australia has been good at 1 and 3, but our gathering in/being an inclusive community is not so good. We need to reach out to divorced people, laicised priests and others who've been ostracised—and gather them back into the fold. (b) It is NOT a Roman Empire-type Church suffering from the "illness" of Clericalism—"in other words, authority geared to power and not to service" (Archbishop [-])—but one committed to Jesus' concept of "kingdom", a Church of Servant Leadership rather than one of power-seeking clerics sitting up on pedestals of their own making. Pope Francis explained in a letter to all Catholics (20 August, 2018) that Clericalism is an ailment that pretends "The Church" means "priest and bishops" that ignores or minimises the God-given grace and talents of lay people and that emphasises the authority of clerics. When Bishop [-] spoke against Clericalism at the 2017 Catholic Mission Conference, he got a standing ovation. Hear, hear, I say!

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

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass priests must be obedient to the words of the liturgy. It is extremely frustrating that priests add or change words of the liturgy ALL THE TIME. This is disobedience. Many priests regardless of age, routinely change the words of the Mass. In [-], the only churches I know the Mass will be celebrated correctly are [-] and [-]. It is a terribly sad situation that priests think they have the right to change the words. Even senior members of the Church hierarchy in [-] routinely do this. I have stopped putting money on the plate if I ever visit a Church not faithful to the words of the Mass. I have a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary but the Hail Mary is

NOT part of the liturgy. If a priest wants to pray a Hail Mary, this should be prayed after the final blessing. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is about Jesus Christ, not His mother. The Blessed Virgin Mary wants to lead people to her son and not have priests put the focus on her. Many, many priests insist on praying the Hail Mary during Mass even before the Consecration. The document titled 'The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy' makes it absolutely clear '(3) Therefore no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.' Lay Catholics have every right to hear the Mass celebrated correctly. Disobedient priests need help. They should leave the Church if they cannot be faithful to the vow of obedience. Vocations come from holy priests, not disobedient priests. Homosexual priests are ruining the Church. Any priest who is a homosexual should be dismissed immediately. Greater screening of seminarians must be enforced. It is better to have no priest, than a homosexual priest.

To encourage a more contemplative focus in religious education. This could be implemented by arranging class Masses for all the grades until the end of year 12. Class Eucharistic adoration— prep to year 12 with corresponding focus depending on age. More focus on the lives of the saints, especially in regards to social justice. Social justice studies alone can, I think, do more harm than good, especially when the Catholic school leavers enter university and get bamboozled by extreme left politics.

God is telling us in the same manner He told Francis of Assisi...the Church is crumbling, it is falling into ruins around you ... go and rebuild my Church.

Be open to ALL, especially respect those whose disabilities may be impairing. Recognise the myriad of gifts that are present within those who have any type of disability.

Living in Australia as practicing Catholics brings an awareness of the secularisation of society. The persecution of the family and the legalisation of abortion since 3rd December 2018 in Queensland as well as the support of Euthanasia by the majority of the population are all signs of this secularisation. Additionally, the persecution of Cardinal Pell has damaged the image of the Catholic Church and further reflects the acceptance of sin as normal in our society. Living in this reality, God is asking us to remain constant in our walk in the Neo-Catechumenal way leaning on the Word of God and the Eucharist faithfully and not lose the zeal. As well, we are being asked to not hide our faith but be a living sign of Jesus Christ to others even if persecution follows. Young people ought to be accepted and welcomed so as to introduce life and joy to the life of the parish which in many places is dying. We are asked to announce the Gospel by door knocking, doing popular missions and giving catechesis. As the Second Vatican Council has pointed, there is a need to form Christian communities to gestate faith and where the transmission of faith to children can be done. The domestic Church has to be alive with the Sunday Lauds channelling guidance to children of school age up to adulthood. In order to be able to pass this faith, parents must be themselves on a journey of faith that can enable them to be stewards of truth. For this to happen, they must be under the guidance of catechists. A shrine to the Virgin Mary here in Australia would encourage greatly the faith of many and call people to conversion.

We are so unclear and scared. Sometimes, we fear what spirit is guiding us and look to those leaders that we trust (even despite those that we cannot). However, we feel the Spirit alive in this

space calling us to a true conversion and calling us to grow into the Church that is a fitting bride of Christ.

I believe God is calling us back to our roots, back to the teachings of Jesus. Jesus kept it simple and summed up His message to "Love God and love your neighbour". And Father and Jesus' mother also summed up what's needed of us in response to Jesus a "Listen to him" "Do whatever he tells you". I believe God is calling us back to basics, and Pope Francis is leading by example. We need to follow his example and his teachings, esp. in Joy of the Gospel and Laudato Si' are beautiful signposts. Bishop [-] summed it up perfectly in his testimony to the Royal Commission. His input on clericalism was perfect. Many clerics talk about the need to address clericalism but I wonder how many really get it. There's talk of including women in decision-making but I wonder if it will be business as usual in the sense that women and other laity will be invited onto committees and commission for lots of talk and "listening", only for decisions to be reserved for closed-door meetings of clerics, where the most senior cleric gets the final word? We need to be practising what we preach—living Joy of the Gospel and Laudato Si', the Gospel. Bp [-] in [-] after its most recent severe floods attended a Mass in a little Church that had floodwaters through the day before. After Mass he spoke with the people and then spontaneously walked around the block speaking with people at their homes showing concern, "loving neighbour" for real, and then he made a practical response. Beautiful leadership for the rest of us—"smell of the sheep" stuff. Also we need to be rid of this ugly divide between "right" and "left". The Church has to be big enough for us all, for all "styles" of being Church. Aren't we all needed? We need to "listen" to one another and "love". Imposing our v...

The Church must listen and respond equally to we the ordinary faithful and not give more weight to clerics. We as Church are being asked to change the clerical model of leadership in response particularly to the current crisis of sexual abuse. I wholly endorse the wise words of Bishop Vincent Long in his address to the concerned Catholics of Canberra and Goulburn: <https://Catholicoutlook.org/bishop-vincent-address-to-the-concerned-Catholic-of-canberra-and-goulburn/>. Imposing our view, our way on others is not the way. Church needs diversity, not uniformity. Recent attacks on the Pope by "conservatives" are examples of the worst of ideological battles. How can we love others outside Church walls if we're attacking ourselves?

I believe that at this time God is calling us to look forward not from a problem solving perspective but from a kingdom building one. We need to ask the question, what would our suburbs, towns and cities look like transformed by the Good News of the Gospel. How can our parishes and dioceses serve the purpose of building the kingdom in our midst? Everything needs to be directed to this aim, that all hearts know the love of God and that they know their identity in Christ as sons and daughters. How would our world look if each member of our congregations left the doors of the Church equipped to be a missionary disciple in their homes and workplaces. We need to have a vision for the Kingdom that goes beyond our four walls into government, education, health, entertainment, business and every area of our daily life. We need to re-engage with our pastoral works and social justice works with Jesus at the heart of all we do. Each time someone steps into a Church there should be an opportunity for encounter with Christ and transformational worship. Eucharist should be the ultimate expression of this and be truly experienced as 'source and

summit'. Other opportunities for worship, adoration and prayer should also be encouraged. Each Church should have a living and dynamic experience of being a 'house of prayer'. Our churches need to become true communities welcoming new believers and caring for those in need in their midst. Our priests need to stand alongside lay leaders, actively seeking to stir up the gifts and call of each individual so that each member of the congregation can become a true participant in the prayer, life and mission of the Church. I really believe that this is our way forward and there are many avenues we can explore as we begin to open ourselves to the vibrant life available to all those in parish communities. Some of the programs and resources that could help our local communities become thriving hubs of missionary disciples alive to the action and power of the Holy Spirit in our midst include: Alpha Courses, Life in the Spirit programs, Called and Gifted, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, NET and DYMT youth programs, Divine Renovation. Whatever programs we use it's important to remember that each community is rich in resources present within the heart of the congregation. Listening deeply to the individuals present in our parishes and recognising that each is uniquely gifted and placed to serve their Church and local community is important. We need to be clear on what unites us to allow a beautiful diversity of expressions of the Gospel to spring up in local communities around our nation.

God is asking us, as a lay Catholic community group, to carry on our work of evangelisation and to bring more people (especially young ones) into the Church in collaboration with the Catholic parishes. How can the Church help us:

- Church to share their facilities and allow us to use them for free to do our evangelisation work.
- Allow us to incorporate multi-cultural Catholic practices in the Church celebrations like Filipino Catholic cultural practices, i.e. Christmas Dawn Mass or Simbang Gabi, Feast of Sto Nino or Sinulog, etc.
- Open regular dialogue between Church and lay communities i.e. Lay and Clergy Congress. God is asking us to exercise, maintain and enhance freedom of religion in Australia.
- For the Catholic schools to continue to teach and freely exercise the Catholic faith.
- Incorporate Catechism in the curriculum in the primary schools.
- Employing practicing Catholic teachers only in Catholic schools. God is asking us, as Catholics, to be bold and to stand up for our faith, for what we believe in.

God is asking for union, comprehension, and be accepted! Before even start to talk about the gospel.

The following responses were the most common themes throughout listening and dialogue sessions within our high school.

- More accepting.
- Deeper worship.
- Everyone invited to receive communion.
- Youth events at every Church.

- Female priests.

- Make Churches more comfortable (air conditioning, new seats).

"And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith. She may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but she will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man's home, where he will find life and hope beyond death." PBXVI

God is asking for his Church on earth to be sensitively updated and regrouped to better connect with the community so the faith can be made more relevant without compromising the Eucharist. I believe God would like the Council to review and where appropriate make changes to Women's role in the Church including governance and priesthood. Marriage after divorce and divorce itself. Marriage rights for priests. Family planning. Redefine the pathways of Catholic Education curriculums and our school mission programmes in order to better achieve faith connection rather than the prevailing disconnect. We should engage the family and its interconnecting relationships. Develop skills which would enable stronger marriage relationships as part of our schools curriculum.

Back to Basics.

We need a Church where all belong in a full and meaningful way. Women need to be recognised as equal to men. A Church that perpetuates discrimination cannot hold relevance for people in the 21st century. There needs to be an authentic reconstruction. Entrenched beliefs and practices need to be reconsidered and reconstructed so as to hold relevance for the modern world. The distorted ideology that men are divinely authorised to rule over women's lives will become more difficult to sustain. When the Church has truly embraced gender inclusivity then other forms of inclusivity can also be truly embraced and expressed. * There needs to be a culture of open discussion and debate where all voices hold equal weight and validity, not just adhering to the same old models which clearly are no longer working. As Cardinal Newman said 'consulting the I' results in a 'development of doctrine' that is not simply linear in nature but also corrective. Now is the time for creative reimagining of horizontal structures of episcopal accountability that includes bishops, clergy and laity.

I think God is asking us to listen to what he taught us when he was living in this world as man. I think God wants us to live our lives "doing unto others as we want them to do unto us", I think God wants us to know that no matter what happens in our lives he always is there for us and loves us no matter where we are in our journey.

I think God is asking of us to be holy—individually, and as a Church.

To return to the heart of Jesus. Entreat people by stressing how far we are away from God—the need to return to the sacraments especially Reconciliation. Remind people mortal sin does exist. Identify social behaviour which is prevalent in society today which is offensive to God. Remind them of the consequences of sin. Tell them how much our Lord loves them. Practice Benediction, love of the Eucharist and power before the Tabernacle.

We believe that we, clergy and laity, need to be acting out of spiritual poverty rather than conscious humanistic control and thus believing that God is able to bring order out of chaos; That we all repent as in the time of Nineveh forgiving one another, including ourselves after appropriately being contrite; That we acknowledge our need of God and surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit; That we live in authentic daily communion with God and others based on prayer, the Word and servant ministry; That our joy in the Lord is readily communicated to others within and outside our Church; That we be a welcoming community in word, action and deed, at home, at work and at worship.

My feeling and hopefully the mood of the country—I don't claim to speak for God—is that true justice and compensation is the calling. Stop protecting the criminals who hide in the Church—those hiding them are just as guilty. Fully compensate those individual you know who are hurting—stop making their lives difficult with secrecy clauses and fancy lawyers who conceal justice and the truth. Sell land and churches to feed the poor and fully compensate those abused by priests. This is a pilgrim, frontier Church not an exhibition of wealth and power. Mass and celebrations should be low key and not with gold chalices—remember the messages from "The Crucible" about hypocrites. Priests should be servants and not leaders with large house and cars and foreign trips—bad examples of humility and interiority. The model we have for bishops and priests clearly does not work. Married priest, woman priests—this is the way to go. I can think of many wonderful married men and women who would make wonderful priests. This needs to happen. [-] [-] 2019

More of a focus on stewardship of the environment. Forgiveness in the Church. Focus on acceptance of difference (especially as educators—be agents of change). Show compassion/stand together for those in need on a global, national and local level.

I believe that God is asking us to be mission to our people, particularly our aged, in our parishes. Last Sunday an elderly woman said that she could not go to communion because she had not been to confession. She lives in an outlying part of the suburb where we have Mass on a weekly basis but no confession. She does not drive. Somehow this woman, who does not keep good health and can't drive, has missed out on being updated on the teachings of the Church which could be given/included in the Sunday Mass. I reassured her that God loves her and that He would love her to receive Him in communion every chance she has. Another thing that bothers a lot of our parishioners is some of our priests don't value the importance of their role as parish priest and take off for meetings in other states leaving our community struggling and the Assistant priest overworked. Another area of concern that no meetings have been encouraged in our parish re: the Plenary Council—not all have computers and there is no way for them to be informed, if not encouraged by the PP. Lack of communication is a factor in the breakdown of marriages. It is also a factor in the poor running of our parishes. More emphasis needs to be placed on Mission to the People, not on buildings, maintenance etc. Just look at some of the Outreach Churches—their services are held in warehouses—nothing flash; and boy are their numbers ever growing where ours are dwindling. JC preached in the open air, rarely in temples/Churches and look at the crowds that gathered to follow Him. The priorities of the Catholic Church have become far too materialistic; many of our priests are not people-persons and don't relate to their parishioners—perhaps don't know how or don't want to.

<p>Care should be for ALL—not just one group no matter how important the hierarchy’s opinion is. There are many elderly completely disillusioned with what appear to be changes for change sake.</p>
<p>God is asking that more women be given much higher leadership roles in both Church services and in the hierarchy.</p>
<p>To be confident about our faith. Know who we are as Christians so we can share this with others. Use opportunities as they come to us share God's love for us all, this could be through a very simple action. Remembering who we are, and why we do what we do, this will keep us close to God and allow us to share God's love as feely and easily.</p>
<p>Coexist, tolerance, love for fellow man, prayer, keeping faith, observing the Ten Commandments. Also keeping the family together.</p>
<p>For all people to get back to basics of human existence—being part of a community/ village/ clan , helping each other, supporting each other in many ways. Today many people are feeling alone/ die alone as we are not thinking about our neighbours and people around us. We have become so self-absorbed in ourselves and our own problems. I think God is asking us to help the drought/ flood and victims of natural disasters, as communities open our hearts to those less fortunate, the elderly, the lady down the road with health issues, the single parent or those similar. They will then believe in the higher powers from above and in turn help others, and we can unite as a family.</p>
<p>To be authentic and to be honest.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking the Church (us) in Australia to more powerfully demonstrate our inclusivity of all people without judgement, particularly those in marginalised and discriminated groups. These groups might include those traditionally focused upon such as the poor, those with mental health conditions, and asylum seekers. However, we also have a Christian duty to support other groups such as those of diverse sexual orientation. We might not necessarily agree with their lifestyle, but we must ensure we protect them from discrimination. If we really believe in evangelisation, we must do this through our actions, not just our words and prayers. The Church as a whole also needs to atone for the transgressions of those who have abused children and caused significant suffering for them, their families, and communities as a whole. Once again, it is not just about words and prayers, but also about decisive actions that can be taken to prevent these problems in future and to seek forgiveness for those that have already occurred. It is not enough for policies and procedures to be developed, but these must actually be followed. If the community can see actual steps being taken to improve this situation, then faith will be restored in many. It might also mean that individuals will be more proud to profess their faith. Although, this also needs to acknowledge that it is not our faith that is the problem, but human frailty.</p>
<p>I think he wants lay people especially married couples to have more of a role and recognition in the Church. Better formation about faith and issues like same sex marriage and why it cannot exist in the Church. More accountability of priests and bishops but not of their own type but from people not employed by the Church.</p>
<p>To be kind and caring to all including ourselves. To be diligent.</p>

<p>To return to the teachings of Christ, “tear down the temple”, return the Church to the people and ask the clergy to be humble as Christ’s representatives and not arrogant.</p>
<p>I feel God is asking us at this very difficult time not to lose faith. I have been put to the test as I have been shaken to the core with the deceit and cover up of the Church. I have contemplated leaving the Church, but am hopeful in the present climate that the Church will become more Christ-like and less focused on power and position.</p>
<p>1. Repent for our complicity in the abuse of the vulnerable; 2. To move away from clericalism not just say we are going to; 3. To limit the role of the ordained priesthood to pastoral and evangelical ministry for only then can we truly claim to God that the so called hierarchy of the Church are His disciples and not the power-seeking administrators that the world sees running the Church; 4. To welcome women and married men into the ordained ministry. Not as deacons but as priests and bishops and cardinals and popes.</p>
<p>To take control of the Church and its future. Take management out of the hands of bishops and give it to managers. Give women positions of authority.</p>
<p>For leadership that acknowledges and takes responsibility for past hurts by listening compassionately to the voices of victims, listens again and again, until they feel heard, and then actively works towards a restorative justice. For leaders that are representative of and connected to the cultural communities they serve: Male, female, celibate, married, all intimately aware of nuance in an Australian context. For ongoing faith education for priests, teachers, adults, teenagers and children that more widely reflects the richness of contemporary theology present in their everyday lives. For a Church that uses its power and resources for radical social justice, rather than dwelling in the safety of conservative circles.</p>
<p>God is asking us to love. Each one of us has a unique perspective and view of how to love one another. When I look around the world it is full of people loving as God asks us. However these people have been excluded, shut out, forced to hide away, turn off the Church and God because of the way that the Catholic Church interprets the word of God. God calls me to love. I choose to love even though my faith doesn’t make it easy.</p>
<p>We believe that God is asking us to build communities founded on the Gospel values that sustain and empower and that, in turn, provide meaning in people’s lives. We want to be a Church that listens to learn, acknowledges and acts to shape a broader community that is more sustaining, more just, more compassionate and more fully alive. We believe the call of Jesus to ‘act with justice’ and align with the ‘poor and down-trodden’ is indeed an essential part of the mission of the Church, and should never be considered ‘secondary business’.</p>
<p>Valuing human life The Catholic Church has always taught the intrinsic value of all human life Our modern society appears to devalue human life in many instances. These include advocating abortion, euthanasia, disregard for the needs of the disabled, neglecting those who are disadvantaged and alienated and punishing without rehabilitation for those who commit crime. All these issues are complex with many personal and social realities surrounding the problem. The Church in Australia needs to be more active in not only constantly proclaiming the value of human life but be more involved in challenging personal and societal factors that are the root cause.</p>

Practical support and Pastoral Care for individuals and families facing these realities needs to occur at all levels within the Church. The Church needs to advocate for improved welfare benefits, increased funding for Charities, funding for palliative care, pregnancy support services, and more rehabilitation centres. Our parish communities need to be aware of those needing Pastoral Care and welcome all. Catholic communities welcoming the disadvantaged people including former prisoners. Catholic Christians have always believed in the important of being a Community. Our current parishes are based on this belief of the need for community. The strong belief is deeply rooted in scriptures, supported by theologians and reiterated in the documents of Vatican II. Pope Francis when speaking to the Montfort brothers of St. Gabriel said that a true Christian community "attracts and evangelises each day". Catholics he stated need to "form welcoming communities". This welcome he challenges must extend to the poor and marginalised. It is the experience of those ministering to disadvantaged people including prisoners, that most parishes whilst often prepared to give to these ministries are not prepared to welcome' the poor and marginalised '. Many times, it appears that they lack the 'know how' to do this. Other times they actually voice their objections to any attempt by others to do this. Chaplains ministering in our Correctional Centres find this problematic. When a prisoner asks where he or she can go to continue to nourish their faith, they know there are few parish communities they can go to. Other Christian denominations seem to be more welcoming. This is especially true of the evangelical groups. The Uniting Church has several programmes geared towards integration of former prisoners into their communities Life. We ask that parishes be encouraged to consider ways of being more inclusive. That education and programmes be provided that enable our parish communities to understand the needs of the disadvantage and alienated.

To be supportive and inclusive.

It's hard to know. We are in a state of turmoil with the weather, politics, the Church and child abuse. Prayer doesn't seem to be altering much so I can't define what I think God is asking of us at this time.

He wants us to spread the Catholic faith as much as possible and wants us to follow the true faith in the gospels. He also would want us to keep his commandments and laws.

For the Church: "To wake up and become explosively alive to the point where it, with the power of the Holy Spirit, will shake the earth and nations with its dynamic presence" Fr Bob Bedard CC. With the many problems upon us I feel God is pleading with us to embrace change and speak into our culture by summoning prayerful, visionary, engaged leaders/leadership teams who will raise up/ shepherd vibrant spirit filled communities. Working together with the power of the Holy Spirit we will influence our country for good and for God, radically change lives and make disciples who will bring people to Jesus.

God is asking us to be a 'responsive' Church. Responsive to the changing world in which we live. We need to question some of the Church's traditions and ask whether they are still meaningful in today's society. Today's world is equitable and for this reason women need to be given the opportunity to have the privilege of becoming ordained. The Mass and liturgy also needs to respond to all its members. To engage the youth in Mass, we gospel messages need to be presented in a simple, meaningful manner that is related to the real world. A less traditional, and

more engaging, liturgy is the key. Music needs to be lively and upbeat. We need to ensure that our priests can be understood by the parishioners. Some priests from overseas are very difficult to understand and children especially have difficulty understanding them. How can they get a message from the Bible if they can't understand the way he speaks? Our Church needs to be more welcoming and inclusive of all in society. What we are doing to welcome new comers at Mass? How are we looking after the needy in our communities?

To keep God's religion going. We need more priests. Permit priests to marry.

To evangelise in the sense to reach the far away, to go out and meet the people who don't know God. To be a sign for the other. This sign could be to be a Christian family who live a Christian life, open to life and the centre of society with a father, a mother and children with God in the midst. This means that the family makes God present in the society. To be a sign means that the people don't need faith to know that God exists, because they see it in the life of the Christian. To have mature faith in the sense of being able to love the other as Christ loved us. Not only having Natural Religiosity in the sense that one goes to Mass only to fulfil an obligation or to bargain with God or because they need something from God, but to receive Spiritual nourishment. The Church needs to have a strong catechetical program for young and adult Catholics to experience Christian life. To receive faith. This should be done in communities inside the parishes that meet regularly under the word of God. The Adult Christian should stand firm in faith against persecutions, like the current political climate. It is also important not to compromise our values, whilst retaining the welcoming attitude of the Christian, that see in the other Jesus Christ.

Our group spoke of the ways God would like his people (the Church) to relate to non-believers and what the Church could do to create a more positive image. At present the Catholic Church is seen in a negative way due to the actions of some individuals and the seemingly 'old fashioned' rituals it represents.

I think God is dismayed by the inept and perhaps dishonest handling of the clerical hierarchy's handling of the crisis facing the Church with regard to the child sexual abuse. This is a time for action and not words. The devastation caused by the abuse and the poor response to the abused is shameful. I think it is time for the laity of the parishes to reach out to the victims and offer them real support to mind and body. First to give them the love and assistance that they and their families need and second, by showing them love to hopefully bring them back to the Church.

I think God is calling for reform of the Catholic Church. For example, I believe that women should be able to be priests and cardinals so that the unique qualities women have can be used to influence the Church. I learnt in my Study of Religion class that women were priests in the early Church but that men soon took over. I also believe that Jesus would have wanted women to be priests because he entrusted three women to see his resurrection first. Women being priests would also help to solve the shortage of priests by opening it up to the other half of our population. It could also encourage more women to get involved because it would make the Church seem more inclusive and respectful of women. Additionally, the Church needs to become more accessible to the general public and the good that is done by the Catholic Church should be brought to light. It seems to me that most Catholics have been Catholic since birth because their

parents were Catholic. I haven't met many people who joined the Church later. The Church seems to be losing members rather than gaining them. That's why the Church needs reform.

What an infantile decision to call a P.C.2020. Imagine asking a lost group for directions. 90% have left the Church. Of the other 10% some are C.I.N.O—"Catholics in Name Only." Of this 10%, who disbelieve in only one item of the Creed—they are not Catholic. It appears that, as well as the sheep, the shepherds are also lost. Perhaps they need to be re-educated in the Faith. Ponder for a moment: Jesus sitting down with his 12 Apostles and saying, "Listen, I'm thinking of starting a Church. I would like your ideas about what you think it should look like." [-] [-]

To be more caring, trusting, loving, to be less judgmental of others' beliefs, words and actions, to be more inclusive in decision making, to listen more to the opinions of lay people and religious working 'at the coal face'.

To stand up against paedophile clergy so we can once again show God in his true light.

I was part of a parish group who came together last evening. I wanted to show you how passionate and interested we are in the country. We had 20 people attend the facilitated session and we were fired up!

I believe at this time God is asking us to turn our hearts and minds from the noise of this world and rediscover His teachings through His Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. From this understanding we can be assured He is not asking anything different to what He has always asked of His people. However in our modern secular society where moral relativism has become pervasive, the Church appears to be somewhat irrelevant in mainstream society. The decline in the number of faithful has created pressure from without, and from within the Church to change with the tide and adapt to suit 'modern' values and secular lifestyles. But Jesus did not come to appeal to popular ideas, He came precisely to challenge them. His message was not always appreciated or embraced 2000 years ago, as it is not today. Therefore I believe it is critical for the Church to resist the pressure to change its teachings or doctrines. If the Church were to cave under pressure, the Australian Catholic Church runs the risk of being 'modernised' into nonexistence. As the Church undergoes this difficult and painful period, it seems apparent that all Catholics are called to live the simple message of Christ... A message of love, truth and salvation. Like Christ and His Apostles we need courage and strength to go forward, not fearing judgement or persecution and be willing to share Christ's sufferings as well as our own and that of our brothers and sisters. The Australian Catholic Church can be a beacon of light, despite the darkness in our midst, if we have strong leadership in our clergy, if we teach our children the truths of the faith, and if we live our lives according to God's holy word.

I think that God is asking us all to wake up from our lethargy, and to look around to see to others and encounter them face to face to touch them spiritually. This situation challenges us especially to the youth to get involved, not waiting from others to do the job. All of us need to do something now, to contribute for the life of the church in Australia. Church means life, means joy and love, where everyone feels somehow relieved and precious or loved, so it is the time that we all give our hands together to cultivate more our faith by praying, longing for the Holy Spirit to bless us and give us the power and grace so that we will be encouraged to share the Word, the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many people here seem to be depressed or troubled but looking carefully we

can see that those people are not introduced to the Lord, they grow up and fill themselves with something else which does not fulfil their spirit. The spirit needs the word of God to live in peace, For our Lord has told us that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). In this time, Jesus is inviting us to deepen our devotion to Him, by bringing more souls to Him, those who still do not know Him. It reminds us about our Commitment to the Lord from our baptism, wherever we are we can strive in our faith to give the best of ourselves to our family and friends and the entire community by promoting so many good actions, such as prayer groups within the communities to deepen and understand God's word, also Catechesis with children in our parishes that looks so empty throughout the weeks and especially on Saturdays. These children that The Lord loves the most are growing without knowing Him. Also to create a vibrant environment of Choir, collection, receptions and reading teams involving youth not just the eldest alone. To embrace each other in so many ways, praying continually with humility, so that we can give a significant step for the Church to flourish more in Australia. [-]

Preamble:

We are two married baptised practising Catholics who have raised 3 children from whom we have 6 grandchildren, all of whom were baptised in the Faith, educated in Catholic schools and Colleges and who regrettably, are not currently practising their faith (i.e. not attending Mass or sacraments)

We are concerned about this and feel they think our teachings are outdated, not within modern standards, and suggest there is no reason they should bother these days. The events of recent times have endorsed their thinking we believe.

Submission # 1: Exclude Celibacy Vows in future and allow priests to join in wedlock.

In recent years we attended Mass in [-] when we met the celebrant who informed us he was originally an Anglican priest who converted to Catholicism and who has been allowed to celebrate Mass and sacraments even though he is married with children. We were astounded! Then we discovered that this was not an isolated case. He was not allowed to become the "parish priest" however he said but could perform as a stand-in for absent priests etc.

If this is so, then a precedent has been set already, and he seemed to be perfectly well accepted by the congregation. He did mention that property, such as his house for wife and children, was a problem for the Church to embrace, i.e., in the event of his passing, what becomes of his wife and children when the housing belongs to the Church.

Even so, perhaps the unravelling of celibacy vows may produce men who will come across to the faithful as normal human beings who understands their problems etc. and may help stamp out this curse we are currently enduring. Our younger generations see this as well we believe.

We note other Christian Faiths allow marriage which seems to work for them. Why should we be different?

Submission # 2: Reinstate those priests who were forced to resign in order to marry. We have a friend of 40+ years who baptised our daughter before leaving the priesthood to marry. They have 2 adopted children now with their grandchildren. Over the years he worked in Charity positions in Hospitals etc., never losing his faith, but suffered over the years in his inability to practice as he was trained, as a parish priest. Whilst he is happily married, he is regretful of not “doing his job”!!

As stated above, we have already met with a converted Anglican priest, married with children, allowed to celebrate Catholic Mass and sacraments and yet our friend is not able to, however willing he might be. A tragedy!! And, in our opinion, somewhat hypocritical!!

(2)

Submission # 3: Allow women to become priests

Again, other Christian Faiths have embraced this and it seems to ordinary people to be working. These are women who could be single (such as Nuns) or married, as males are, or widows etc. Again, women are powerful forces to assist the young to embrace our Faith probably far better than their male counterparts.

Submission # 4: Make it easier for Men and Women to enter the priesthood

We relate more to Australian priests than those imported into the country and understand the difficulty in encouraging more local applicants. We don't know the answer but there must be some way to modernise to attract more applicants, such as our suggestions above. Do we have archaic practices that need overhauling?? The changes to Mass procedures from 60 years ago to the present have been significant, but more needs to be done in order to attract these younger generations.

Submission # 5: Why is it always about money?? And Property??

Can't we in Australia control finances to the extent that married priests (both sexes) may receive a decent wage and perhaps have the ability to purchase homes in their name or whatever or some system to give the family security (often transferred around parish to parish). They would be much better accepted into society than seems to be the case nowadays. The Church has always been known to hoard finances, for what reason, to send to the Vatican??

This is not entirely true we know, given that schools, Churches and aged care homes need to be continually established and maintained, but it seems to be a blocking point in any attempt to allow priests to marry, from our layman position.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinions.

I believe God is asking all the faithful (including the clergy) to be open to all ideas put forward and then discern what can be done that doesn't conflict with the teachings of Jesus. Also, that we need to have faith that the Spirit will open the hearts and minds of those who have the final voting rights at the meetings of the Plenary Council so that they can discern what God is saying

through all the submissions and that the necessary change will be forthcoming to make the Church more relevant to people of today and into the future. In addition, we need to commit to the teaching of Christ and how we proclaim His teaching.

To restore orthodoxy in our Churches, schools and other institutions. I received a terrible formation at Catholic schools growing up. I was taught secular sexual ethics and pseudo-sciences. I was also taught virtually nothing about rich Catholic history and tradition. Please, study *The Metaphysics of Evolution* Fr. Chad Ripperger. It's a pocketbook that philosophically exposes the fallacy of evolution theory. Also the Kolbe Center (www.kolbecenter.org) is another excellent Catholic source exposing the pseudo-science of this theory. Why does it matter? Read (concise article): <http://kolbecenter.org/the-traditional-doctrine-of-creation/> It's warping the brains of Catholics and our approach to faith and morals. It truly is. We've put the crown of infallibility on fallible men, and assumed credibility in these men and institutions they simply do not warrant. The scandals in the Church are a symptom of a much deeper crisis. Catholics from the top-down, and the bottom-up, have largely lost our faith. We have, in biblical terms, fallen away. Christ is calling us to be the light and salt of the world, not to hold hands with the world and affirm everyone in their sin and non-Catholic religions.

More professionalism and less incompetence (performing at least to a level of service expected by government or other institutions). Better support and acknowledgement of parishioners who dedicate years of service to ministries and approaching them when changes are being discussed.

Provide more faith education in parishes.

The Church in Australia has clearly lost its way. When the Catholic Church in Australia asks the Question "what does God want of us? ... what is the Spirit asking of us?" You know the ship is sinking. Why? Simple, a kindergarten child could answer that question, the purpose of the Church is to SAVE SOULS FROM GOING TO HELL ... period. Its job is to administer the sacraments and sound doctrinal teaching and guidance to lead souls to Heaven AND evangelise non Catholics to conversion. It is obvious that since Vatican II, the course of the Churches 'charter' has been obscured and confused, not to mention seriously distorted. It is obvious that The Vatican II experiment is a failure. It has served only to act as a Trojan horse for modernism to enter and create its destruction within the whole of the Church. A whole generation of priests have been indoctrinated with modernist teaching in the seminaries, and hence have spread their errors and confusion among the faithful. "Judge a tree by its fruit" what has been the fruit of the post conciliar Church? Empty convents, empty seminaries, empty Churches, loss of traditional doctrine, loss of faith to millions, trivialising of the most sacred and reverent aspects of the Church, confusion, disorientation, unprecedented sexual atrocities among the clergy. Loss of public respect for the clergy, disintegration of the Churches influence in society, etc. etc. etc... what else do I need to say. The Church MUST RETURN TO PRE VATICAN II TRADITIONAL TEACHING OR PERISH ... PERIOD. The last 50 years has been a proven testimony that modernist, progressive style Catholicism is destructive and leads to failure. The Churches mission is to save souls ... not to save trees, or even social justice ... or world peace ... it has one function to SAVE SOULS BY THE TEACHINGS and SACRAMENTS GIVEN TO US FROM CHRIST...PERIOD!

A greater humility about who we are, what we have achieved, how we fit into the bigger picture and more gratitude for the great gifts we have. So a much greater determination to protect our environment, more welcoming approach to people from other countries, greater appreciation and celebration of our Indigenous people and heritage, more humane treatment of refugees, a more modulated and independent stance in terms of security alliances, the development of spiritualities/overarching meaning stories to prevent youth suicide and perceived meaningless living, development of "housing first" policies to assist young families and avoid the scandal of homelessness.

To reach out and gain the trust of people. To see a return of the belief in Jesus and the Church. For more people to practice and attend Mass.

God is asking us to remember that Jesus began his ministry by challenging the laws and rules of the society and religions of his day; and therefore God is asking us to remember that we are the Church and that being followers of the teaching of Jesus is the most important way of being Church. Our vision is a Church that generously shares the wisdom that has been gained by generations of people, who have been followers of Jesus, through the teachings of the Gospels. We dream a Church that has respect for all of Creation, as a priority—not just respect for the Hierarchy. We dream a Church where living the Gospels is the most important aim. We dream a Church where sharing the gifts and talents of those within the community is the essence of being Church, encouraging growth of this sense of community.

Evangelise Australia by teaching the kerygma. Read the scriptures—in Mass and at other times. Make the readings known to the congregation (by reference) and encourage us to read the context of the scriptures—during Mass. Develop pathways for female leadership within the Church. Revamp Catholic education so it really reflects Christian faith. Return to adult sacrament of Confirmation. Make it a uniform expectation to assume that non-Catholics are in the congregation—so that all are welcomed to the table of the Lord (see attached document on this topic. Allow glass goblets to be used for consecrated wine. Share the wisdom of our talented priests by Podcasts of homilies from inspirational clergy e.g. cf Fr Riccardo, Michigan. Review of Church teaching on IVF—not a good process occurred when the Church teaching was decided and this is a God given tool to allow us to reduce human suffering. Acknowledge gay civil union for what it is and empower those in the sacrament of marriage.

Australia needs to get back to the teachings of our Catholic Church and not 'watered down' versions. People are confused and most Catholics do not know what the teachings actually are and then therefore have no real love for the Church or her teachings. I am one of 5 siblings who all went to Catholic schools and I am the only person who attends Mass and receives the sacraments regularly. My siblings are even hostile to the Church and view her teachings as old fashioned, this is because they neither know them nor do not understand them. Our Catholic school system has failed us. My faithful parents sent us to Catholic schools so that we would be taught the faith and we were not. This is still happening today. Catholic schools are very good at being Christian but do not embrace Catholicism as their defining element. Every single child at a Catholic school should be taught the Catechism and high school students should be studying apologetics. This provides them with a questioning mind set and the skills to search in the right places for the Truth. Our staff at Catholic schools do not profess or live the faith and so it is impossible for them to impart

this to our children. The Catholic education offices Australia wide need a big overhaul to radically change this. The lack of families that attend Mass every week and the hostility to the Church as well as the increase in secularism in our society shows us that a change is needed. Also, many faithful Catholic parents (including myself) cannot trust our children's education to Catholic schools and so we are forced to home school or find the few schools willing to be faithful to all the teachings of the Church (for example: [-] College in [-] and [-] College in [-]). I would like to see our Catholic schools getting smaller and only staffed by those persons who are living their faith. Families of all denominations are welcome at the schools, but all the staff must be committed to upholding the teachings of the Church in all areas. Another important thing for change is that Adoration should be a regular occurrence in every single parish. The fruits of Adoration are amazing. Finally, I would like to see the Tabernacle put back into the centre of every single Catholic Church. God should be at the very centre of His house and not somewhere that you need to go in search of when you enter a new Church. It amazes me that this should even be an issue.

To be more open and just as faith community acting in ways to serve all people. As an organisation we are being called to be more inclusive in the management and governance of our Church. Not just in far past but also recently clergy have acted to control, hide and protect aspects of the Church in ways that have led to people walking away—and I am not far behind. While I have sought to be involved in Church matters many clergy have set up barriers (organisationally, discursively and psychologically) to discourage involvement of many like myself. Many of my fellow parishioners have reached the point of saying “why bother?”.

People ignore the Church and believe falsely it is foolish and base lives on rules without evidence. The majority under 30 live pagan lives even if influenced to some extent by past culture based on Christianity and by examples of charity and decency they have seen. Many Churchgoers are grieving for many of the coming generation who have no link to God or Jesus or the Church. The only answer we have is to live even more radical lives of love. More holiness. Love and Forgiveness—Communion • Love one another as Jesus encouraged through service to the marginalised and asylum seekers • To see each person as valued and important • Ephesians 4.3 "... endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace." • To let go of past wrongs through repentance. Love ALL who present themselves—in or out of the Church • Concentrate on the teaching of Jesus • By this they will know you are my Disciples: That you love one another • Mention of rules for still born babies funerals; e.g. which way the coffin is turned; No funeral. Review these rules. Saints have seen visions of aborted babies grown and “in heaven”. Is it possible that some of the rules are not from God? • The conjecture, about the opinions and actions which Jesus would express, were He to come amid our society today. What would He make of our binary, divisive form of government? Of our treatment of asylum seekers, of people who are homeless, who are aged, who are mentally disturbed, who are the victims of violence, of racial bigotry, of all forms of discrimination? • Then I realize that we must not lose hope, and that means doing something about these issues in our own backyard. How many couples, on their wedding day, plan to separate, to be, other than loving, toward each other? Yet, the reality is, that over 40% of marriages end in divorce. Church Structure and Stewardship • Reduced dependence on Hierarchy; lay organisations • At a parish level not a school level • Graduates with no faith whatsoever. Not Christ like. • Bishops, cardinals and Pope—all retire at 70? • Allow diversity—Lay

Preachers • Support all supporting marriage and family not just some • Take on the Vatican II responses re: Church structure and stewardship. • More support for the values of Western Civilization • Trust in the Plenary Council Process, Openness and Tolerance • Listen openly to the needs of all people • Tolerance and welcoming of new cultures and customs • Ethical use of the environment • Reduced use of natural resources • Communion available to all who confess • Open—Eyes—Hands—Ears—Hearts Vocation, Nurturing • Help the young generation • Young people find relevance in the Church • Become involved with Political and Social issues • Gratitude, Service and Diligence leading to Openness for the Family, the community and for other countries around the world. • Catholic bishops to give as much support to the Ministry of Marriage as is given to the youth; • Eliminate domestic violence.

Reassess our current practices and see what works and what causes/encourages/fosters the issues that we are currently facing—bureaucracy, immorality, opulence (fact and appearance), etc. It should start from a very young age. And the first focus when teaching children from a very young age should be God and Jesus. They can start learning about the blessed figures later on, and make it clear that they are meant to serve as inspirations only and must not detract from God. I say this because when you speak to children about religion, all they know about it is Christmas, Jesus, and Mary. Which I think diverts many young Catholics from the central figure of our faith. They know the saints very well, but Bible figures like Abraham, David, Solomon, Job, etc., not so much. They are more likely to quote contemporary persons for inspiration rather than the Bible's Wisdom Books. I think God is asking us to get on with the times to respond to the changing needs of modern day Catholics. If possible, can we please have an app with all the resources we will ever need for teaching children, for young people to read, and for adults to refer to. In a digital world, people now prefer to turn to mobile devices/internet for answers. It is most important that the materials to be included therein have solid Biblical basis, so every Catholic can engage in meaningful and informed discussions with others about our faith. Can the Church also work more towards practicing what we preach? A lot of what turns off people from Church is the constant harping on for donations. Especially the auto debit ones. I know many people wish to give this way, but a lot may also feel isolated and guilty (about not being able to). Many people wonder why the need for a strong push for funds when we have all these opulent Cathedrals, ceremonial apparels, etc. I know it takes a lot of money to run charitable facilities and look after our priests, but maybe just maybe have a thorough and honest assessment of all these areas. The Catholic Church owns so much property, investments ... I feel like this is so far from the Church that Jesus talks about in the Bible. Thank you and I hope that a lot of good things come out of the Plenary Council—hopefully things/ changes that are tangible to ordinary believers like me.

I do not have a personal relationship with God, but I assume God would expect all humans to respect each other, and I would think God would expect women to have an equal role in spiritual and Church affairs.

Bring all Christians together.

Coming from migrant families, we feel God is calling Australian Catholics to embrace their Catholic traditions as we do in developing countries. Often this means standing up against government or political errors, or in other words standing for the truth... the truth of Christ. We see too often recent Catholic migrants to Australia who opt to go to Protestant churches as they feel we have

become too politically correct, too cold in our churches and are losing our youth if not already lost. It is not because they have no love. Look at how much they love sport in Australia. Let us return to Christ... Let us have leaders who stand up even when the media attempts to silence them and little by little we will see more and more people drawn to Christ as the leaders in our Churches shine the light and lead us to light our own and glow for this beautiful country that gradually seems to get darker with laws that harm the family, the unborn, the elderly and now as we see even attempt to attack our sacred sacraments. Catholics know that these attacks aren't new but we need to call them out with and through our leaders. From character assassinations of our clergy, attacks on the Church and its traditions. Let us be the light of Australia and call out with love what is good and what is sinful from tradition, doctrine and scripture as many souls are being lost each day due to our inaction.

I think God is asking of us to be more inclusive in our churches, to welcome the homeless, the ex-prisoners, the divorced, the Indigenous, the refugees, lapsed Catholics. All are welcome. God is asking us to be authentic human beings, to stand up to abuse, in marriages, in work places. I hear priests joke about marriages, but I want to hear priests say in their homilies that people are not to stay in abusive relationships, that it is the right thing to leave a marriage if it is abusive. I hear so many people say they can't leave their marriage because the Catholic Church does not agree to divorce. But that is wrong. We are not meant to stay in an abusive relationship, God wants us to live life to the full, but we can't do that in an abusive relationship. I am tired of hearing priests joke about marriages etc. We have to get the message out that domestic violence is happening and it is ok for the woman to leave / or the man to leave if it is not a healthy relationship. Also to make annulments easier. It took 2 years for mine to come through. Mine was appealed by the "Defender of the Bond" and sent to Sydney. It was a very traumatic and emotional time. If the Defender of the Bond had to live in my situation, then he / she wouldn't be appealing it. I was very angry about it all, but thankfully it has all passed now. But I can understand why so many don't go down the path of annulment, and so just leave the Church!!! Thankfully I have had great support through counselling and spiritual direction. What can we do to help this whole issue? Domestic violence and divorce and annulment. I want to hear at the Masses what is domestic violence—not just physical abuse but emotional and mental abuse. I know there are people there at Mass who are in unhealthy relationships. What can be done? To recognize the role of women in leadership roles, in ministry, in the priesthood and diaconate. And that priests do not have to be celibate. And that we are all equal, whether we are ordained priests, deacons or laity, no matter what our qualifications are, or experience, we are all called to respect each other and to listen to each other.

I think God wants us to show the rest of society that the message of the Catholic Church is unadulterated despite all the scandals that have been revealed. We must illustrate to all that we are a force for good notwithstanding that many in Australia think our moral standpoint has been compromised. How we do this is the challenge.

I think God wants us to transition from a transactional Church to a truly transformational one. Since Constantine, but especially since the reformation, the Church has been in defence mode, putting a high priority on being correct and making sure everyone follows the rules. It lost sight of its mission to transform people and reconnect them with Divine Love, to discover the image of

God already within themselves and grow more and more in likeness with it. St Francis understood this instinctively, but his path became sidelined as alternative orthodoxy, while mainstream orthodoxy continued to root out error and formulate words. The spirit of Francis desperately needs to be rediscovered in our time. We need to move from a right and wrong mentality to one more concerned with love, and being able to lovingly hold the tension of the opposites. This could include creating a new rite of the Mass, where the language of the prayers is formulated from a place of positivity, and a spirit of becoming what we already are, rather than a negative place of defence against heresies. It could include a greater voice for women, whose natural tendency towards nurture has been sidelined for so long in a masculine dominated Church concerned with winning battles. Training in contemplation could be part and parcel of normal Church life and sacramental preparation, little by little challenging our small egoistic self and moving us towards a broader, more expansive true self. Families especially need to be supported. Marriage preparation must be strengthened and extended well beyond the wedding day. The Church should probably use less words to teach and more action and example. Francis didn't argue with the Church authorities of his day, he just lived differently. There is so much inertia in a huge organisation like the Church, so many vested interests, and so many egos, that it seems impossible to imagine such vast, fundamental changes ever becoming reality, but if the Holy Spirit is indeed calling us in this direction, and I hope many of the other submissions also flow in this vein, then it will happen.

I believe that God is asking us—

- To focus on the people, not the buildings
- To build and maintain sustainable Church communities that will provide nourishment to the people of God throughout the length and breadth of Australia
- To reshape our models of pastoral leadership to accommodate the lack of priests and religious
- To build healthy, sustainable models of pastoral leadership to replace the models that are dead and dying
- To be inclusive rather than exclusive
- To be authentic, real and relevant
- To let go of our egos and trust in God's providence.

To care for creation by encouraging our leaders to take climate change seriously. To support young people in an ever demanding world. To implore our leaders to shut down detention camps on Manus and Nauru.

I believe that God is asking of us the same thing that he asks of all (the same things since the beginning of time) is to be open to knowing God; God's love; God's Son and to be caretakers of God's creation. To know that God's creation (in all its forms) is created out of love and that it is good. In relation to 'us' I imagine that refers to the Catholic Church and that we are asked to be the living Jesus and therefore we must be clear on what we believe in and determined to look after those that are marginalised (and that is everybody as everyone experiences struggles/injustice at some stage of their life). I think we need to be more outspoken about social justice issues; giving reasons on why we take the stance that we do; not an attack on what we believe is wrong but rather arguing the stance on what is right and why we believe this. God is asking us to make his word be relevant in today's world. I therefore think homilies (short, to the point) need to be relevant to today's world and people, where parishioners go away with one key message to support them in their week. I also think God would want us to be humble yet spread the message to all about the wonderful things that are happening in our local communities, in our country and across the world in spreading God's message of love.

Reform the sacrament of reconciliation so that there is less occasions requiring First and Second Rite and more occasions for a developed Third rite ceremony.

There needs to be revised relationship between the First/second Rite and the Third Rite. There is justification for legitimacy of third rite in mainstream practice. Third Rite can be communal or a one to one practice without the need for disclosure of any particular sin—in other words this rite of the sacrament of reconciliation would only require a declaration of sorrow, a private examination of conscience in the presence of the priest without the need for disclosure and then the main focus was upon a declaration of forgiveness (rather than “absolution”) accompanied by some form of declaration about being repentant, firmly purposed to amend and some focus on living in the community in the future. The one/one practice of the third rite is quite common for hospital chaplains who cannot hear sins due to lack of privacy from other patients/staff in close proximity. So the Third rite does not just involve a community gathering. It also involves one/one situations. Presently all third rites require the attendance at a First Rite as soon as practicable for disclosure of so called “mortal sins. So there is no rite presently existing that does not require personal disclosure...unless of course you get killed or die before you can attend a first/second rite disclosure service. If we parallel with AA they have an emphasis on restitution as a public display of sorrow and sign of going forward. The practice in Australia is not about restitution for the sacrament of reconciliation in its actual on the ground administration....even with private sex sins there is little attention paid to the effect on relationships of selfish desires and emotions. The present administration of the sacrament is all about absolution with lip service (literally) paid to penance and restitution. So given that scenario I want to highlight the focus on clericalism inherent in the bias towards to absolution as the excuse for personal disclosures. The real task of reconciliation is transformation but all the weight of the practice is loaded at the front (disclosure/absolution) and nothing really loaded into the penance/restitution part. That has been discovered in the Royal Commission where it is obvious that historically and in the present, priests think the central role of the sacrament is the declaration of absolution...getting the sinner back into “grace” rather than penance/restitution which is about getting the sinner back into a mode of relationship that reconciles all the responsibilities we have to our victims of our aberrant behaviour and making sure that the aberrant behaviour ceases to affect not only my soul (?) but the body/soul of people around me! The Big Question: recent experience shows that people can attend Mass regularly and be active in Church life and practice and yet have long term absence from the sacrament of reconciliation of any rite. This shows that loyal good Catholics believe they can manage their own spiritual relationship directly with God.

Despite a name change since the Second Vatican Council, the sacrament is still a sacrament of Confession with little or no practical ritualising of the reconciliation and transforming requirements of the sacrament of reconciliation. The discussion about the ability of the State to overcome the seal of the confession is a worthy debate but it is drawing oxygen from what are the core concerns of a Plenary council. The debate about religious freedom and the Seal is not a topic germane to the Plenary Council 2020. The Plenary council needs to focus on what is concerned with the life of the Church relevant to the broad cross section of the membership. The seal must remain but this is a specific question that derives from the nature of the sacrament and how it is

structured in practice for all penitents. The present structure is broken and irrelevant. I have attached a text document that questions the need for disclosure in the sacrament and why the Plenary Council needs to focus upon the need for disclosure in the sacrament in the ordinary course of the sacrament. The particular case of paedophilia derives its significance, for internal Church life, from the position of the role of First /Second rite versus third Rite. Maybe we need a fourth rite to address this mainstream position. The debate about the seal is about the place of religious freedom in Australia. This is a matter beyond the confines of the plenary council. Whereas there is a more basic question for the Plenary council. What is the scriptural basis for disclosing sins in the confessional. The present sacrament focusses on clerical absolution under the guise of God's law. God's law concerns reconciliation and transformation. These are broadly ignored in the present administration of the sacrament. Many good Catholics function effectively in the Church without recourse to the sacrament of reconciliation in its present form. The sacrament focuses on the wrong aspect of the spiritual life of members and hence they seek their own spiritual guidance wherever they can find it. They have not found it in the sacrament of Confession. Despite the name change the practice of the sacrament means it remains still a sacrament of Confession! This must be developed and matured whereas laity and clergy will not frequent the ritual. The sacrament must become a ritual of reconciliation. Absolution as a term should be removed and the ritual should be about 'forgiveness' that is the legacy of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is not a clerical tool.

In the past we have been invited into the membership of the Catholic Church community as a methodology for saving our souls as individuals. This also led to a call for love of neighbour as a way of saving our own future. However Church life was not explained in terms of authenticity; fullness; completion; when we thought about our neighbour—the act of caring for a neighbour was couched as an obligation without there being a clear narrative which explained how saving my soul was related to saving my neighbour in body and soul. It was always obligation—obligation to God being primary from all else somehow followed. Hence the celebration of the sacraments became part of meeting some obligation. Baptism removed original sin; confession removed new sins; marriage made cohabitation honourable; holy orders made a man into a "persona Christi"; holy communion rewarded us for being good; extreme unction kept us away from fires of hell. Hence a rubric of the sacrament of reconciliation that mandated confession of individual sins made sense—the priest needed to hear the sins named and then he would absolve them with only a cursory penance—the point of the exercise was absolution rather than reconciliation. It was presumed that reconciliation was signified in opening our inner most thoughts to the scrutiny of the confessor despite there being an unspoken pact that the confessor would not enquire much past the surface level of our lives and our acts of sin; penance would also only be symbolic rather than commensurate with the sins confessed. It has made for a revolving door where both penitent and confessor have seen their roles as the declaration of need (I am guilty of sin and I want to shed that experience of guilt) and the declaration of that need being satisfied (absolution). Therefore the Holy spirit today is calling us to consider a form of the sacrament that is truly an experience of reconciliation (an experience of being freed to go forward to a new way of being in love) rather an experience of simple escape—escape from punishment; escape from the past without a roadmap for the future. The evidence for this is the desertion of the sacrament

of reconciliation by the vast majority of practicing Catholics and Catholics who are on the margins of regular attendance at Church events. They manage their sinfulness within their perceptions of their place in the community of the Church and the secular. They do not ignore sin—they manage it without access to a ritual which for them is no longer powerful sign of the reconciling action of the Christ life upon which the Church was founded in the first place. In an era when access to health professionals and governments and digital technologies, people feel connected and if anything overwhelmed by community. They crave individuality. Despite Pope Emeritus benedict XVI claiming that the First rite provides that experience of individuality it is not an opinion shared by the absentees.

I believe God is asking of us what God asks of the Church in every age—to love and to speak the truth in love; to be the light of the world; to not be afraid, for God is with us. The Second Vatican Council stated "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel". The signs of the times in our world today are evident in our faith-dismissive, if not openly faith-hostile secular context in Australia. We are not only witness to but embroiled in cultures of death, violence and abuse; cultures of materialism and consumerism; cultures that promote individual pursuits of individual preferences, devoid of reference to objective and absolute truths and responsibilities; and cultures of nihilism and meaninglessness. Maybe the Church at its worst and in its sinfulness has contributed to these cultures. Consequently, we have brought obloquy upon ourselves. However at some level, the Church has always faced these cultures in different forms and rather than bunker down, and circle our wagons, I believe God is asking us as a pilgrim and prophetic people to listen to these cultures, to engage in critical conversations, to pose questions (without imposing answers necessarily), to minister to the wounded of these cultures and there are many, and to witness to the death and resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour through our own communities of life and love. That means that we cannot do business as usual, our status quo needs reworking. We need to be aware of the casualties of these cultures, those who our society shuns, spurns and spits out and like Mother Teresa ministering to the dying, roll up our sleeves, get down on our knees and wash feet; feed the hungry (and there are more than food famines out there); accompany the lonely; and propose alternatives to these cultures. I believe God is asking us not only to find him in the faithful, the sacraments, and the 'sacred' places and spaces, but to see God in our all our Australian peoples, Indigenous, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Immigrants, the poor, generational Australians, and communities, in their deepest yearnings and hopes, in their needs, and their cries. I believe the Spirit of God is upon us and within us as we undertake this discernment process and I am inspired and encouraged by this. God is calling for dreamers amongst the young and visionaries in the older ranks, not nay-sayers; not negativity and passivity, not idolatry of the past, but openness in trust in the future where God is waiting for us. Some bishops and priests may need to leave their ivory towers and pedestals and presidential chairs (even for a brief time), and listen to and follow those who may understand and navigate this secular Australia while living their faith courageously and joyfully every day. To paraphrase the words of Bob Dylan, "please get out of the way, if you can't lend a hand". Passive inert laity will need to pray for energy and action too.

Tolerance of all religions.

I participated in a Dialogue session run by the parish in which I teach last year.

God is asking those of the Catholic faith drive change from the ground up within the Church and push for transparency and honesty from the Catholic Church. The Abuse crisis that exists within the Church will only ever be truly addressed when total honesty and accountability is achieved. To hold a person or persons accountable for their actions and have them face real consequences is more pastoral and what God would ask of us then to view their actions purely through a lens of forgiveness. Forgiveness and accountability can co-exist and this needs to occur within the Catholic Church. To ensure the survival of the Catholic Church beyond the current generations of people alive this must happen. When you attend Mass each Sunday there are families, older people but very few or no adults 18-35 without their parents. My generation value greatly people and organisations that are genuine and honest and this applies to the Church. To appeal once again to the greater public it is time to be genuine about change and safeguarding and accountability for clergy and all involved in the Church, by publicly naming all offender clergy convicted or not and by publicly updating the public when clergy/employees/volunteers are dismissed and why. This is true evangelistic way as it shows the Church is serious about the wellbeing of its people.

We are focusing on the music ministry. In our parish, we are one of several small communities. For the most part, we prepare the music for Masses in our community. There is a central parish music group that also prepares music for the largest of the communities. The repertoire and demographics of the various groups are very divergent. We believe that to sing is to pray twice, and we endeavour to provide the best possible music to enhance the liturgy to this end. Attached is a 500 word account of our thoughts on this issue.

What he has always asked of us: to know and love him, and to serve him in our neighbour, so that we and they may come to a perfect union with him in eternity. And as always, we cannot do this without his grace: this has been true in every age of the Church, and in every nation (including Australia). Furthermore God our loving Father ever desires, more deeply than we can comprehend, to give us his help and grace to do these things, to enter into this intimate relationship with him through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus our task is to let God help us! Our own plans and ambitions for the Church are always tainted by our warped perspective. We too easily descend into factionalism, letting a deadly politicisation infect the Church that divides “liberals” from “conservatives”, or whatever other monikers we choose to use. It is only with God’s help that we can avoid these “dissensions” among us, so that we can be “united in the same mind and judgement” (1 Cor 1:10). So, how do we let God help us? I truly believe that only those who have established a profound relationship with God through prayer can be fully receptive to his grace, because they only have the security of knowing that they are loved. Without knowing God’s love, we cannot love others deeply—fear prevents us from taking the risk of total love. Instead, we fall back on our own resources and pursue our own desires, though often under the mask of serving God or the Church. Without this loving union with God, family lives are fractured and broken by the challenges of living in a world that is antipathetic to Christ; single people are cut off in isolated loneliness that leads to a truncated existence, focused on self; and clergy and religious become timer-serving clerics who go through the motions of the faith without transmitting its life and joy, “holding the form of religion but denying the power of it” (2 Tim 3:5). It is no surprise that the scandal of abuse has so rocked the Church when we have

expected men to live an evangelical life, a life of great sacrifice, without the secret to living sacrificially with profound joy: by union with God in prayer. The Church must become, again, the school of prayer: real prayer, mystical prayer. Karl Rahner was right, I think, to say that “the Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all”. Of course recommending mystical prayer is risky—people can go off the rails, mistakes will be made. But we have a great tradition of masters of prayer in the Church—John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, etc.—who are safe guides, and there are excellent modern interpreters of these saints: Thomas Dubay, David Torkington and many others. Let’s begin again to prioritise prayer above all else. Otherwise, any other plans we make are certain to fail.

The birth of the Church was at Pentecost. The Catholic Church is a Pentecostal Church whose members have received "Special Gifts", (Charisms) of the Holy Spirit. Each believer has a right and duty to use these gifts within the Church and for the common good. The Plenary Council prayer calls for a new Pentecost. The Church must not attempt to extinguish the Charismatic Renewal, but embrace it.

Develop prayers for the 21st Century. Based of true interpretation of scripture.

- Unity, humbleness, • repentance for the wrongs of sexual abuse by the clergy, • forgiveness, mercy, • healing, following the example of Jesus to heal the sick, • actively exercising our faith by praying for people for healing, • cleansing and renewal, holiness, listening, • God-centred Catholic schools, prayer in schools, • reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians, • outpouring of the Holy Spirit, • baptism of the Holy Spirit for parishioners and schools. Life in the Spirit seminars for every priest and parish, • adoration and exposition, • being faithful to God's word, • having a knowledge of what we believe, • having experiential knowledge of the love and presence of God, • freedom in worship, joy • understanding the need for praise and worship of God, • breaking ungodly soul ties to religion, tradition and ritual, • more outreach to the community, • listening to the youth, • creating vibrant and authentic worship, • worship God in spirit and truth not just parrot form, • be more alive at Mass/Eucharist, more heart-felt participation, • evangelism, sharing what it means to have a relationship with Jesus, • become stronger in advocacy, • respect, rekindle, renew our faith, • communication with God, listening to God, • asking God what He wants to do with His Church, • compassion, understanding and love for the lost, • spending time alone every day in personal prayer with God and not just being “one hour” Christians • Evangelize children so they develop a personal relationship with Jesus (not just sacramentalised for Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation). • Religious instruction every day in Catholic schools • Prayer in schools • Daily prayer in schools at the start of each class. • Rosary in all Classrooms—broadcast daily over school PA system (in October) i.e. ‘Plant a seed’ to child (may come to love Rosary later in life) • Children’s Mass weekly • More lively worship, teaching • Priest—tell gospel story—put life in it (dress up in character— e.g. as David with a slingshot) ...more likely to be remembered • Walk for Mary (religious procession) • Daily prayer • ‘Plant a seed’ to child • God Centred Families • Instagram—young people (e.g. students may become marginalised if they do not have Instagram).
- More men serve—be assertive • Love God, neighbour as self • Will the changes ever see us uniting with another Church. • Where is the Church taking us in the next 10 years? • Can we be stronger in our Advocacy? (abortion, same sex marriage, etc.) • How can we increase our number

of priest? • How can the new generation know more about God? (children, youth) can be part of the Church regular activity • How can we strengthen our own family? • How can we support the priest more? They should be accountable to somebody (psychologically, spiritual growth).

That we embrace true respect for each other to challenge the awful scourges of domestic violence, gender inequity and evil treatment of vulnerable people seeking asylum. That our political and Church leaders give up their self-focus and reclaim a generous spirit where their power is used for the nurturance of the common good. That we all learn to listen to each other and allow our hearts to be moved by what we hear. And act!

I think God is asking what He had always asked and that is to be faithful to him by listening to Jesus. How the Church can achieve this is the problem in an increasingly secular world.

1. Married Male priests Allow some married men to be ordained as Catholic priests (perhaps working on a part-time basis). Allow some ex priests, who are now married, to be re-admitted to the priesthood (perhaps working on a part-time basis), provided that the reason they left the priesthood does not create an impediment for them to be readmitted to the priesthood.
2. Female Deacons / priests, Allow both married and single women (including members of a religious order) to be ordained as Deacons and consider ordaining women as priests (especially members of a religious order).
3. Reduce the authority of the parish priest when it comes to parish finance matters. Too often we have experienced priests who waste parish funds on unnecessary items, when the parish can't afford the items, without having any consultation with parishioners; or when the parish can afford to do so, fail to spend funds on necessary repairs. We have also experienced parish priests who clearly don't want a parish Finance Council / Committee, and either fail to establish one, or establish one but fail to consult it or simply ignore its advice, as they want total control over parish finances.
4. Mass The celebration of Mass needs to be addressed. Firstly, the changes in recent years to the wording of parts of the Mass needs to be revisited. Secondly, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass each week as well as Holy Days of Obligation needs to be revisited, particularly with respect to the treatment of the failure to attend such Masses as a serious 'mortal' sin. Thirdly, from our experience in recent years, priests rarely remind parishioners which days are Holy Days of Obligation. There appears to be a lot of confusion in this area. Perhaps Christmas Day and Easter Sunday should be the only Holy Days of Obligation, and attendance at Sunday Masses should be encouraged but not obligatory. We would suggest that all Catholics, whether practising or not, be strongly encouraged to attend Mass on Christmas and Easter Sunday (which many do anyway), through the media and social networks. Many people, particularly young people find going to Mass boring, and therefore stop going. This is a real issue that needs to be addressed. How 'lapsed Catholics' are contacted and how their spiritual needs are met, and how they can experience a genuine need for the Church and the sacraments needs to be examined.
5. Birth control Issues—We believe the use of artificial birth control needs to be revisited.
6. IVF—We have two beautiful grandchildren that we would not have had if it wasn't for IVF. They are clearly a gift from God. Nevertheless, while we believe that some aspects of IVF should be allowed, we also believe that other aspects should not be allowed. The whole issue of IVF needs to be revisited.
7. Divorce issues / Annulment—The issue of remarriage after a divorce, and a way of receiving the sacraments and being accepted back into the Church needs to be examined closely and pastorally.

To be a more welcoming community by: 1. no denial of baptism—for any reason, 2. to have Welcoming Persons stationed at all entry doors before and after all weekend Masses as they distribute parish bulletin and invite to refreshments after Mass or to ask questions, 3. have light refreshments after all weekend Masses—publicise in bulletin also, 4. For special occasions—Baptism and Communion and Confirmation, Memorial Masses etc., have: A) Welcome Person at all entry doors. B) Before ceremony begins, have overhead screen announce that refreshments are available. 5. Social media outreach—post future events on parish Facebook and parish website page.

The Church members and its leaders must strongly challenge the non-Christian values in today's society. The bishops and parish priests, I'm afraid, are too aloof from the people and do not understand the struggles they have to go through on a daily basis.

God is asking us in Australia, to have more faith, trust and love. He knows we get discouraged and we feel alone sometimes but God wants us to know his presence is with us, we need to be still and appreciate what is around us.

- God is asking us to be open and welcoming to all people:- divorced, gay, marginalized and women.
- Priests who have left—give them the option to minister again.
- Celibacy be optional for priests.
- Ordination be open to: married men, women.
- Include women on all levels of Church.
- The Church's voice be heard with regards to domestic violence.
- Allow for the third rite of Reconciliation to be celebrated within the communities (given the history of the private confessional where abuse took place).
- Revise liturgical language to be more inclusive and current rather than based on medieval theology and superstitions of that time.
- Allow lay people in hospitals and age care facilities to offer anointing of the sick in the absence of a priest.
- Allow enculturation of liturgical celebrations
- A return to the theology of Vatican II, The Church in a Modern World, where the Church is fully engaged with contemporary society and responds to its needs and experience.
- To be truly inclusive, rather than just talking about it.
- The seal of confession needs to be broken where crimes are committed against the poor and vulnerable in our society (in particular crimes against children).
- The redress Scheme recommended by the Royal Commission to be fully implemented.
- The Church to be open to the world, rather than shrinking from it.
- To examine where tradition and possibly doctrine do not align with our core beliefs.

Not to be afraid to be counter cultural. Be open to change the way we did things. Engage with people in how they express faith. People speak a different language to the past—we need to speak to them in a way that they understand. Revive my Church! Tradition must be allowed to be adjusted, so that it is relevant to the modern world. Consider—What can we do so that people can encounter Christ? Ministry can't be used to 'drag people to the Church'. Encounter Him. Place importance on encountering Christ and nourishing our relationship before we can help others to encounter Christ. Engage with people—so that they can encounter Jesus. Provide guidelines—Do not water down the faith. Reclaim the Gospel and set hearts on fire. Let the Holy Spirit be the Holy Spirit. Wait on the Holy Spirit. Provide better formation for adult Catholics. Go to the coalface of evangelisation. Provide a sense of belonging in the Church for people disengaged. Reach out to the homeless at parish level. Don't try to do too many things. Focus on reducing homelessness and poverty. Create belonging. To be an open and transparent faith community. Reach out to

those less fortunate. Address poverty. Support people and provide information about how they can assist others. Personally encounter Christ in the traditional way of expressing faith. The clergy need to evangelize, but not just the clergy—all parishioners.

I believe that God is asking the Church to be faithful to its primary mission, and that is the salvation of souls, according to the Great Commission our Lord, to "Go forth and make disciples of all the nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Accordingly, the Church needs to proclaim the Word of God unambiguously, regardless of external pressures from the world and society, which is increasingly becoming more pagan and hostile towards Christian belief and values. It must proclaim the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This is never more urgent than today when the world needs the Church to be as Christ called us, "the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).", and as the eternal salvation of souls hangs in the balance. To this end, it is imperative that the whole faith be taught clearly and forthrightly in all Catholic schools, as well as from the pulpit, to assist parents in the proper formation of their children in the Catholic Faith. There is clearly a crisis in Catholic schools at the moment where barely 2 per cent of graduates continue to practice their faith. I blame this on the fact that they not being taught the faith, so how can they practice it? It is sad to say that Catholic schools are failing our children, as it fails to teach the faith to them as it should and instead a superficial watered down version of the faith, and comparative religions, as if these have equal status to the Christian faith. It is not hard to see why children do not continue to practice their faith in these circumstances. Again, schools are failing to assist Catholic parents to raise their children properly in the faith, such that their children can sincerely receive the sacrament of Confirmation whereby they confirm their baptismal vows, offering themselves to Christ and to the Church for the salvation of all souls, losing their lives for His sake and for the sake of the Gospel, and in so doing, gain it for eternity (Mark 8:35). I believe God is asking us to do this. Our children are lost, and society is lost unless we do so. The world is crying out for purpose and meaning and peace that only the Word of God can give. We must be the light of Christ to the world that it so urgently needs, and so fulfil the mission we have all been called to as followers of Him. Thank you for listening to my submission. Yours faithfully, [-]

To instil the importance of a sacramental Life from a young age. By teaching the importance of regular Confession and making this sacrament more accessible before and after Mass. Also, to provide confessionals with screens for it. Finally, to give the relevance and solemnity due to the Most Blessed sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Church and congregations are all encompassing, filled with love, hope, tolerance and which will be faith filled, honest, truthful and joyful. Future generations will see the message of Jesus. We will see the positives and not the negatives in other Christians and the Church. To increase the Christian numbers, beliefs and to build a better future for society.

We are not being asked, we are being challenged. Challenged to live a Christ-centric life in a world of disdain and a perpetual focus on "me-ness". We are challenged to provide answers to complex questions in an age of instant answers, how we do that is complex but at its heart we need to build a culture of consideration and wisdom and, most importantly, worthiness of being listened to. We are challenged because of the worst parts of the past have never been addressed to the satisfaction of the Catholic community, let alone the wider one. We need to be explicit on how we

reply to the Stolen Generations and what the Church was responsible for then. We need to be explicit in responding to paedophiles perverting the sanctity of our beliefs, frankly—excommunicate the bastards. We need to genuinely seek forgiveness for our sins as a community, and then once that forgiveness is given move on and never repeat those sins.

God is asking members of the Australian Catholic Church to become joyous adults—Clergy must stop treating laity as children—Laity must learn to deepen and articulate their faith—Liturgies and assemblies need to become joy-filled expressions of that faith.

I think God is asking us to spend more time in personal prayer, during liturgy and in parish life. The world is noisy and humanistic, let the Church be quiet, prayerful and centred on Jesus in the blessed sacrament. Individuals need to have an opportunity to enter into a personal relationship with God and parishes need to foster these opportunities.

God is asking of us to restore the beauty and tradition that the Catholic Church once held so high. The modernists that have infiltrated the Church are wreaking havoc among the old and new Catholics. Young people are not being drawn by the modern Masses that greatly lack the reverence due. The majority of the parishes are now run by old women, there is little reverence in the Mass, the sanctuary is swarmed by 'altar girls', the Tabernacle is shoved out of the way and hidden in a small room away from the people, most of the parishioners don't even know how to receive Holy Communion with reverence and respect, there is no silence prior to Mass, altar rails have been removed for no reason and as a result the parishioners have lost reverence for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the music played is completely degrading. The music at Mass should be uplifting, angelic and glorious not tinny, tuneless and appalling. Gregorian Chants and ancient music is befitting for Mass. Mass is to be served with the utmost dignity and reverence possible. The more traditional and beautiful parishes that celebrate Holy Mass with obeisance are flourishing, especially with youth. I truly believe that a more reverent and traditional celebration of the Mass will bring more people to the Church.

To do his will in a practical way that is not grounded in what "men" think is important but what God thinks important. He wants us to be as radical in our time as Jesus was in his. Break the stereotypes and man-made laws and focus on God given laws.

The Church needs to improve in several ways: (1) perception of God needs clarity—Almighty but forgiving, merciful, listening. (2) Role of the clergy needs clarifying—local leader, dispenser of most sacraments. (3) Attitude of clergy needs improvement—respect lay knowledge (of some)—equitable treatment of rich and poorer parishioners—acknowledge input of both sexes—accept own fallibility. (4) Laity need fire in our hearts. Faith and the Mass are great gifts, yet appear to be boring duty Where is the Love? We do not live as Christ did. Desperate need for Biblical knowledge. Baptism should be a joyful rite for the candidate—reconsider infant baptism as the norm. Mass is our Summit and Source. Its structure, symbolism and meaning need proper explanation to most laity, but especially to RCIA candidates. Accepting we have insufficient priests, those we do have will burnout if the situation does not improve soon. Social structure has changed. Families are expected by schools to participate in weekend fixtures/games. Most do not have the skill or knowledge to adequately teach religion too. Schools have done no sacramental preparation or dogma education since the 1970s. Current parents have no idea of Faith basics.

Society has become more secular and "instant". There is no joy of anticipation; please resist this happening in our Church too.

I think it is more a question of what God is asking of the whole world. Maybe this country might lead the way? The more I read the New Testament, the more I realise we have missed an opportunity with regards the role of women in the Church. If anyone in the world takes a casual glance at the history of the Church... we look pretty good stacked up to other institutions. Certainly one of our "aces" has been our leader's great pushing back against the oppressive view of women in the years of the first millennium. Paul said later "... neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". So women taking leading roles... about time? Look, I love priests coming here from overseas, but can I tell you that from my point of view, sometimes a sermon is the only way I connect to the Word during the week (I know, sounds like a cop out... sorry!), and when it's unintelligible, well, I'll let other people join the dots. I thought our religion had a great opportunity to do something positive when lay deacons were announced... not even the most fervent right wing member can deny woman deacons! And yet... nothing. Now there has been talk about married priests. I think that is one Massive blind, and a terrible slight to women. Interestingly, our diocese of Brisbane has been thinking that it is doing something about domestic violence. Now if people were really serious about it... guess what? It doesn't happen because "you're against domestic violence". "We know from the international evidence that these two factors are the core drivers of men's violence against women. So in societies where gender inequality is less, there is lower level of violence against women." (PAUL LIROSSIER) I'm just a bloke hoping this religion, which I love, can go forward.

I believe God is asking the people of the Catholic Church in Australia to love Jesus more. To discover or rediscover His great and tender love for us. In the Gospels He showed us the way to our Heavenly Father. He healed, He taught, He saved, He fed, He included, He Prayed, to name but a few. To really and truly contemplate on His passion and crucifixion more deeply and more often may remind us of the extent He suffered for our salvation. In doing so more often, more sincerely, more contemplatively, we would be impacted by the Resurrection with life changing results as His Apostles and early followers were. They witnessed the miracle and it changed their lives. Jesus often seems like the forgotten One. Parishes and parishioners perform all sorts of good works in His name but don't actually connect the action to Him, His Grace or His love for us. He is not mentioned at meetings, on councils and even on invitations to Christmas lunch for the needy. Parishes can be like social clubs where people gather for fellowship but often the marginalised are not as welcome as those with presence, prestige or finances. Often Jesus's presence is presumed. His Holy name is mostly not on people's lips, in their thoughts or even in their hearts. Committees and Councils are busy doing what they consider is needed but often it has no reference to the great mission command to 'Go and make disciples.' Jesus is still a living presence. His Word still heals, teaches, nourishes, transforms. But when is it read and shared other than Mass? People come, listen, go and take with them some of His gifts into the week ahead. But few parishes I've attended gather to reflect and learn more deeply of that sacred presence in His Word. Committees and councils gather and discuss plans and propositions but they don't take that time to let His Word anchor, form, lead and guide their actions. It is separated from the minds and hearts of those gathered under the plea of busyness, pressing matters, set agendas, time frames.

We get to know our friends by sharing time with them, listening to their stories, sitting with them and just loving them. If we did the same with Jesus, perhaps we would know of His presence more closely, of His love more tenderly and of His plan for our Church and our life with more clarity. Eucharistic Adoration is proclaimed by many great saints as the greatest gift apart from the sacrifice of the Mass, but so few ever take some time to sit in the presence of the Lord each week to be blessed by his limitless and amazing grace. We have every ingredient for our salvation already given, already suffered and died for. Holy Scripture. Holy Mass. Holy Adoration. Australian Catholics simply do not spend the time with Jesus to love Him back. His Word is not on the lips of most Catholics and presence is not a priority for many. He is unknown and forgotten especially with our children..... Catholic schools teaching well for life but not for Eternal life. I have attached a file with an additional submission of more than 500 words after answering these questions in an earlier one.

The Word of God has been watered down over the years possibly in an attempt to make Christianity more appealing to more people. However the law of God will never change (Matthew 5:17) God is asking us to be faithful to Their laws irrespective of how unpopular they seem and they do seem unpopular to those who want especially, freedom to gratify themselves in the world in whatever way they want—e.g. the luxurious comforts only money can buy, sexual gratification without considering chastity. Many people consider it is ok to not pray the Mass on Sunday saying this is a Church law not a law of God as they do not believe in laws made by collective leaders of the Church directed by God's Holy Spirit. God is asking more plain-word education is delivered to people explaining what constitutes certain grave sins and what are the consequences of these sins. If the consequence of dying in a state of mortal sin is eternal damnation then this needs to be stated in plain fact. What is the requirement for forgiveness of a grievous sin? Because I am 72 years of age it will undoubtedly be stated I am old-school and unenlightened. I can assure you I am not stupid but I struggle to find the answers to such questions. No good is being done by leniency about fundamental laws of God.

I think the Spirit is calling for the delegation of authority. My wife and I have both been trying to set up groups in the parish and it has taken several months. The parish priest was assigned to be vicar to the priests in the diocese and wasn't able to contact us because of his schedule. Other priests, staff or parish council were not able to help us. Eventually we got a meeting with him and now we are going through the parish manager to set up the details. We were asked to wait after Christmas because it was a busy time before then. We've rung again now and we are still waiting for approval and access to the room. It's been several weeks. I also think hospitality for newcomers could be improved. My wife chose to become a Catholic. She was already baptised, when she contacted the parish the first thing she was asked was to go back and get her baptismal certificate. I think a gentler approach would be helpful for newcomers. Letting them met up first, give them an overview of the process, introduce possible RCIA leaders and candidates. Encourage them to keep going. Once her baptism certificate was found and presented, the hospitality was very good. I think the Spirit is also calling for more female leadership with real authority in the Church. Woman can have different ways of listening to the Spirit and the Church, and different ways of responding. It seems imprudent to deny the Spirit the ability to work through them at all levels of authority.

0. To know who we are—creatures of God—humility. 1. To be united as a nation under God, to be one, as children of God. 2. To be holy, to put Christ/God at the centre of our lives (by practicing poverty, chastity and obedience), To have a strong devotion to prayer and Our Lady for grace to be holy. 3. To restore the family unit and values (to raise good and loving citizens of God) 4. To know and stand up for the Truth and Christian values, rejecting the wide highway to hell. To be courageous and not be a dead fish going with the flow. We need to be adequately formed in this by having strong and to the point catechism, not wishy washy stuff that is afraid to offend. We need good/strong leaders in society and Church that leads and stands up for truth. 5. To love our neighbours and be connected 6. To consecrate Australia to Mary. 7. To be a radiant Southern Cross setting a good and strong example of a society in God to other nations—showing Faith, Hope and Charity/Love.

I think GOD is asking us to be more like the humble example Christ set during His time here on earth and for which He paid the ultimate price as He hung from the cross in unspeakable agony for 3 hours and less like the image the Catholic Church has of being an immensely wealthy organisation whose hierarchy have given themselves lofty titles in keeping with the loftiness regularly exhibited by them, but I guess that goes well with the expensive vestments and other trappings that usually go with great wealth and power. I have not ignored or overlooked the fact that an organisation the size of the Catholic Church must have a strong financial base or it can't operate and therefore can't help people through the likes of Caritas, St Vinnies and a myriad of other similar Catholic organisations. Nor have I ignored the fact that a lot of the Cathedrals, Churches, altar ware and the like have been donated. Notwithstanding, if the Church doesn't find a way of changing the image it has to the average man in the street the downward spiral it is currently in, will continue and deepen. A good example of the type of thing that contributes heavily to this image is articles similar to one that appeared recently about an Italian Catholic bishop who paid A\$20,000 for a bathtub. The number of Catholics who read that article and closed their wallets as a result I will leave to your imagination. The effect all this and other much more serious Church issues have had on the average Roman Catholic is the reason the pews and the collection plates are all but empty when compared to say 15 or twenty years ago. I am an 81 year old Catholic battling to convince my family the Catholic Church is the one they should attend. I am also having trouble justifying giving the Church money, knowing a lot will be spent on Lawyers and settlements which need not have been so large had the Church been open, honest and compassionate in the first place. I thank those responsible for providing this opportunity and hope a lot will be learned and acted upon. Yours faithfully A disillusioned Catholic.

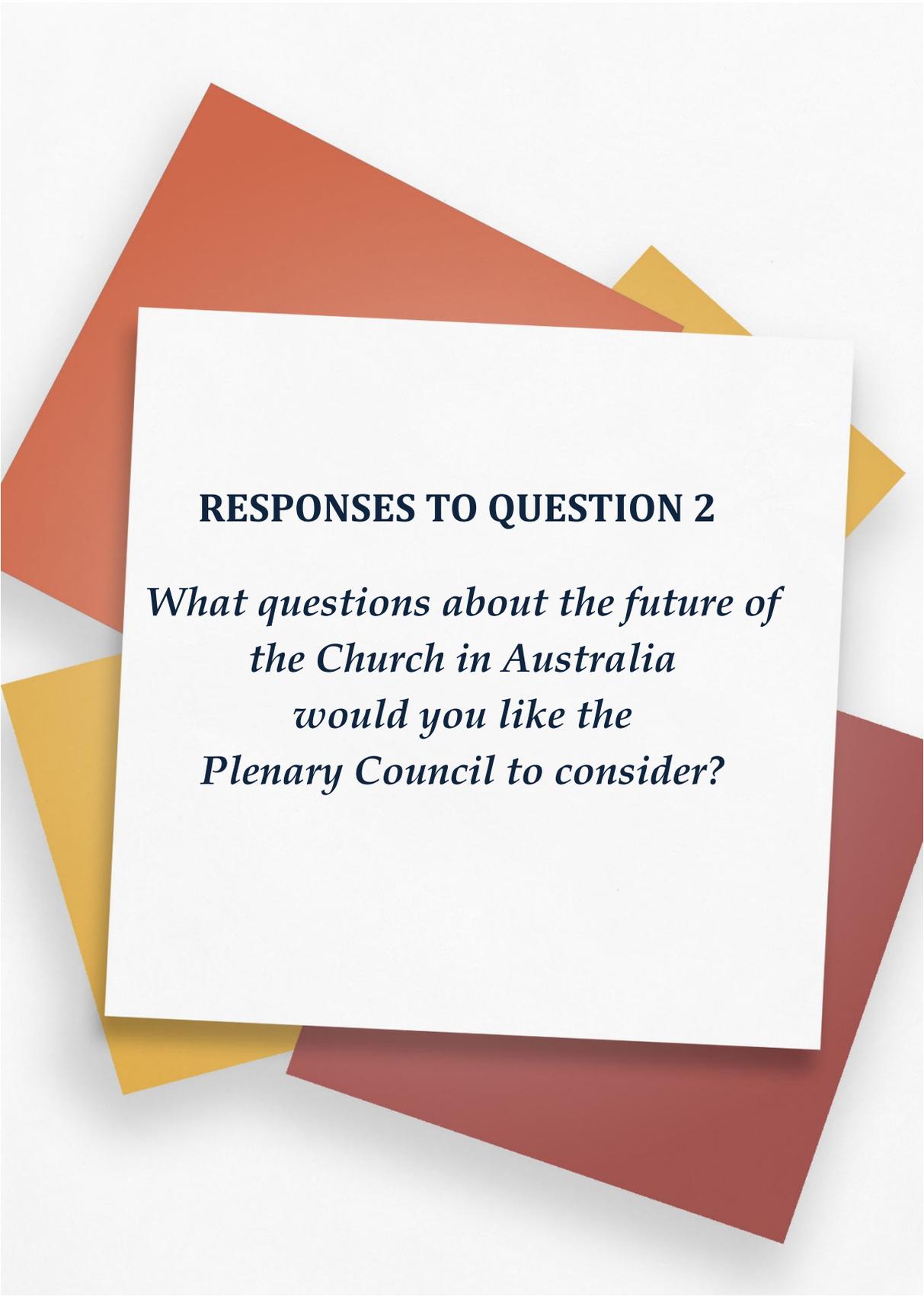
The Spirit saying to the Australian Church in 2020? Dear Plenary Council examiners/assessors: May the Lord grant you wisdom, faith, hope and love in your discernment. I have been reflecting for a long time on the resources utilized within Australian dioceses, religious institutes and parishes. In particular the question of the overwhelming resources used in our school system. One hundred years ago the Australian bishops designated that the Catholic school ought to be a priority for Catholics. Archbishops [-] and [-] of [-] worked with great effort to ensure that a successful school system be established. This was considered necessary given the general level of poverty that many Catholics experienced, especially those of Irish descent. The schools were so successful that many of the poor became significant professionals such as premiers, cabinet

ministers, directors-generals, lawyers, academics, scientists, judges, doctors, teachers, dynamic union leaders and financiers. A whole vibrant middle-class began. The schools main objective with faith education was firmly established. While I know and do appreciate the value of many Catholic teachers who give their all, really sweat, blood and tears for the dissemination, catechesis and proclamation of the Faith, I believe there are questions about the significance now of the whole Catholic System. I ask sincerely—What is the fruit of Catholic schools in our society now? For all the effort involved, I question the fruitfulness of the massive resources. I believe that the priority for the Catholic Church in Australia in the 21st century ought to be in Evangelization, i.e. Bringing the vast number of nominal Catholics to belief, trust and relationship with Jesus the Lord. So many Catholics who were raised within the Catholic school system have seemingly abandoned their baptismal faith. We now have 7% of Catholics attending liturgy. I see many nominal Catholics, decent people, who are not maintaining fellowship with their Catholic brothers and sisters. Greg Sheridan in his recent book *God is good for you*, highlights the pervasive force of secularism and the diminishing practice of Catholicism in Australia. Paul Kelly, a prominent journalist for the Australian, frequently writes about the force of secularism and the weakness of the Church. Professor Greg Craven, ACU Vice -Chancellor also writes regularly in the Australian about the difficult path ahead for even our Judaeo-Christian institutions. We need an earnest distribution and expansion of resources in the apostolic evangelization within Australia. There are many ways we can do this. One of the ways I recommend is that we implement and examine the methodology and ways that Pope Saint Paul's beautiful *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of 1975 demonstrates.

Welcome all people to receive the spirit of Christ. Involve more Laity in the Running of the Church, particularly women. Encourage more religious education for the Youth.

I believe God is asking us to be more loving and accepting of difference. The Catholic Church is far too judgemental and 'holier than thou'. Church hierarchy should get off their pedestal and love as Christ did—amongst His people. Pope Francis is a good example but is hindered by the arrogance of much of the power-loving hierarchy in the Church.

To focus on the basics. Sacraments, catechesis, formation. Our schools do not teach the faith to children. Our parishes offer a lukewarm fluffy version of our faith. The faith instruction over many decades has been terrible. More than 90 per cent of Catholics couldn't be bothered meeting Jesus at Mass as they have now been taught what it is and they have not met him. There has been a Massive failure in faith education that needs to be addressed by teachers who actually believe what the Church teaches and will teach exactly that and not a postmodern, reinterpreted version of it.



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. Can we open up the sacrament of the Eucharist to all who have been baptised?
2. How can we bring female members of our Church to the fullest level of participation?
3. How do we bring our worship to a level that parishioners find sufficiently engaging and rejuvenating so that they want to return week after week?
4. Can we modernise the language used in our Mass to that which existed after Vatican II?
5. Why are you not focusing on and supporting lay pastoral ministry across schools and agencies?
6. Are the hymns we are singing at Mass respectful and reflective of the readings each Sunday?
7. Can it be clarified; are lay people able to bestow a blessing at Communion time?
8. How does the Catholic Church compete with the Pentecostals, Hillsong, etc. that offer kids an attractive product, wrapped up in a relevant and attractive wrapper and connects them to a vibrant community?
9. How can our Catholic education systems be better agents of evangelisation?
10. What happens in 10 years' time when older Catholics like myself aren't around to attend Sunday Mass, undertake St Vincent de Paul work as volunteers, etc.?
11. Why is the Vatican II document *Sancrosanctum Concilium* which spoke of Gregorian chant and the Latin Language, ignored?
12. Why are heretical teachers allowed to teach in Catholic schools?
13. Can we enlighten our neglected Church history of relations with First Peoples for Australian Catholics?
14. Can women be ordained as deacons?
15. Will there be co-responsibility between the ordained and the laity?
16. What is being done to increase vocations?
17. What is the Church prepared to do to begin encouraging faithful clergy who put the teachings of the Church before their personal desires?
18. When are we going to welcome foreign clergy here to solve the dearth of clergy from Australia who can minister to the faithful?
19. Will the future of the Church in Australia be more inclusive of other denominations, e.g. Lutherans?
20. How will the Church handle the same sex issue that would potentially enter the Christian education system?

21. What is the place of the Catholic school in our church communities and in Australian society?
22. Are our schools supporting parents in teaching our children the message of Jesus Christ, or have we allowed other influences to water down the attractiveness and urgency of the Gospel message?
23. Why are women excluded from full ministry?
24. Why is the Third Rite of Reconciliation banned?
25. Is the Church going to begin enforcing its own rules again?
26. Would the Bishops of Australia discuss the Commandments given in the Old Testament by God to his followers, and tease out for us what they mean in our modern world?
27. How can we recognise our mistakes in the past, and show the wider community that we, as a Church, are sorry and want to make amends?
28. How can we connect with the youth of today in a meaningful way so that they can be guided by the Holy Spirit?
29. How can we make the Church a more unified place, one where people feel welcomed and safe?
30. Will there ever be a time when the Church will be fully open and welcoming to LGBT Christians?
31. Given the failure of the Church to attract and more importantly, keep its attendance at Mass, should we look to undo Vatican II changes to bring back a more spiritual Church?
32. Will the powers that be really listen to the voice of the people?
33. Will the "Church" accept married priests?
34. Should we consider paid musicians to lead our music at liturgies where a parish does not have live music?
35. Can the message of environmental stewardship be pushed within the Church?
36. Will the Church reduce the influence of the top-down model of the hierarchy we have now?
37. How can we be a more inclusive Church?
38. Can we make our liturgical language more inclusive?
39. What area of decision-making and leadership could we open up to more women and lay men?
40. How are you going to make it more appealing to be a priest?
41. How do we invite those Catholics who have left the Church to return?
42. Is it possible for the Third Rite of Reconciliation to be brought back?
43. With the dwindling number of clergy, how will the Church attend to people's needs in relation to administration of the sacraments?
44. Will the teaching on contraception ever change?
45. Will the Church consider re-marrying divorced Catholics?
46. Will the Church address transgender issues?
47. How are we going to change the leadership of the Church that at the moment is heavily hierarchical and does not include women?
48. Will my submission be considered in amongst likeminded submissions?
49. What is the Church going to do to engage the next generation?
50. How can the Church amend its ways to make services more inclusive?
51. What is the place of the divorced or broken family in the Church?
52. Where do the mentally ill go in the Church?

53. What support is there for those who are suffering with struggles concerning gender identity and who are in committed and loving same-sex relationships?
54. What information is there for the youth of the Church when it comes to their sexual health and making safe choices as they navigate our consumer society?
55. How are we helping the young to develop their voices and think critically about the world they live in?
56. How will we support our Indigenous Australians and make reparations for past hurts?
57. How are we going to be more active in engaging and involving new Catholics into our community, and how will we continue to welcome refugees?
58. When is the Catholic Church going to realise that the core of being a good person is loving one another, not if you have children before you are married?
59. Are we going to modernise the practice of Mass?
60. How can we create a more open and inviting environment for all Australians, particularly young Australians, in our Churches?
61. Will the Church consider bringing sacraments back into schools?
62. Catholic Schools: How do we get the Catholic schools to teach the message of the Gospel and values of our faith in a genuine manner for our declining believers?
63. Priests: How do we nurture and develop priests for our changing society?
64. Lay people: How do we involve laity in our Churches and communities?
65. Youth: How do we involve youth into our ever-ageing communities?
66. Environment: How can we truly be more pro-active as Pope Francis asked us to be with issues concerning the environment?
67. Divorce: How can we genuinely embrace the divorced or remarried into full communion with the Church?
68. RCIA: In what ways can we engage the newly baptised to be a part of the community and to continue the nurturing of their faith?



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 53 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 have been fortunate in having been involved in the Catholic faith from my first memories. I am fortunate that God has given me the faith to continue to believe in the Catholic message. I am fortunate to have been actuated by the much-maligned Christian Brothers. I could not say anything negative about them. I was not 'special'—just a normal lad who got into as much trouble as the boy beside me. If not for the Christian Brothers and the parish priest of my upbringing, the Rev Dr [-], I would not be blessed with having the faith of Our Lord today.

I have shared this in a previous response.

I am a Catholic who lives my faith through work, study and volunteer work. I believe that we are called to live the example of Jesus, in a modern Australian fashion. I work with the mentally ill in a local hospital and with children in a local state school.

About 12 years ago I came back to the Church after many years away and have found it to be a wonderful, positive experience. It has motivated to not only become a better person (I was a functional alcoholic, due to severe depression, I received treatment and have been sober for about 10 years and no longer have any ongoing psychological issues, much of this was with help from the Catholic Church).

While I am Catholic, my wife was baptised Anglican, but after a period away from Church became an active member of the Uniting Church. We have an ecumenical marriage in which we have come to a better understanding of our own faith and that of our partner through sensitive questioning and discussion. I am also heavily involved in a multi-denominational school that wears its Christianity proudly and welcomes all who want to belong to that community. I long for a Catholic Church that is as open and welcoming, and find it impossible to justify to my colleagues from other faiths the reasons for the Catholic Church to have become as exclusive as it has. I fear that, if the Church continues on its current path, it will become irrelevant to the vast majority of Catholics and to the Australian population in general. Our ability then as a Church to influence debate in this country will be lost.

Belonging to the social justice group in our parish is enriching my faith in our Church, and this counters the lack of focus on social justice I sadly find from many/most Catholic priests I encounter.

As an 80-year-old Catholic, my experience of the Church in Australia is that of a rapidly diminishing Church that has been abandoned by most young Catholics, and many older Catholics, who find that:

- they don't have a voice in Church governance, many parishes not even having a parish Pastoral Council.
- they are expected to just 'Pay! Pray! And Obey!'—their Church is far too slow to change, and is sexist and far too clerical.
- their Church hierarchy have largely failed to listen to them.
- their Masses are too structured and formal and tend to be boring .
- they are denied the opportunity to organise and perform their own liturgies such as those in Pentecostal Churches that are attracting large numbers of Christians.
- many/most of their clergy aren't reading the signs of the times and pay scant regard to Social Justice, which should be at the heart of the Gospel.
- many of their clergy tend to be too focused on dressing up like Roman princes, having an affluent lifestyles, careerism and taking overseas trips.

I feel insulted by the current requirements which I as a volunteer of many years am expected to go through because of the actions of an exceedingly small number of people in the Church (which can never be excused) and the criminal lack of action by those in charge in covering up those deplorable actions. The only reason I have completed some of the utter rubbish I have been expected to fill in is because I was prompted by the thought that perhaps that was one thing that God put me here to do and if I did not do it then nobody would and the person I was to help would miss out altogether.

Some 30 years ago when I made a decision to change my relationship to Christ I was led by others to this type of format for my life and can witness to the fact of a great formation. If God can do this for me he can do it a thousandfold for many others.

My life as a Catholic was radically changed after prayer for the release of the Holy Spirit in my life when I was 21. Suddenly I had a voracious appetite for reading Scripture, reading Christian literature, shared prayer experiences, times of prayer and worship and a renewed faith that impacted all areas of my life. It has had an amazing impact on the course of my life for which I am truly grateful.

Adoration and benediction changed my life. I wish a return and promotion of this would help our Church. I am a Mum of three and go to church by myself as my husband is agnostic. It is absolutely chaotic but my kids totally get it. When my 2yo says 'look, Jesus breaks bread' and when they always want to see Mary, it cements to me why I take them. They get it and are open to what is going on in the Eucharist. I just wish children's liturgy was more engaging for the under 5 audience as I feel this a crucial age for faith development from my own experience. People in our church also need to be welcoming of us and some of the noise. When the pro-life guy at church sees us coming and moves over to the other side of the church, it sends a pretty strong unwelcoming message to us. Thankfully, most people we sit near love kids being kids and are always willing to help out.

At the beginning of this year the Holy Spirit moved everything in me. God told me that during Lent I was going to reduce my production of waste. I'm now a 'zero-waster.' Before the 40 days started, I decided on 40 ways I was going to reduce waste. Each day I implemented another one, and 40 suddenly grew to 100+. I realised that I had to change my entire way of thinking and my entire culture. The Holy Spirit showed me that it was in every decision that I made that I had to consider the impact that decision would have on the environment. I don't buy or consume anything that is in a single use piece of plastic, I am on a journey to grow my own food, I regularly go out and walk on the beach near my house and clean it, I shop fair trade, I make my own when I can, I recycle, reuse, reduce, rot (compost), I refill containers at the butcher and the bulk food shop and the list goes on. This Lent was the hardest Lenten journey I ever went on. And I'm still on it. I sacrificed a lot and I had to think a lot. I learnt about the impact that cultural change can have, but it needs to be committed and purposeful. I am a young person who read the words of Laudato Si' and I think it is the only piece of writing that has ever resonated with the deepest parts of my spirit. I live the document. And as a young person, I NEED the Church to really thoroughly consider its words, otherwise, I won't have a world to live in. During lent I was struggling every day, and one particular day I was moved so much by the story of Jesus entering the table, throwing over the tables and yelling at the Jewish leaders to stop and start again. That is what I feel I need to do every day. It is what the Church needs to do. I could go to my local parish and turn over the table that they use after Mass every Sunday that has single use cups and cling wrap on it, but I fear they wouldn't understand. I have been in dialogue with the Spirit on this for a long time now and the changing culture of ecology in the world engages me and it would engage other young people also. If I had a dream job now, it would be to be a leader of this cultural change in our Church. I am an ecological convert and I'm still converting every day. We need the whole Church to be ecological converts.

I am fully committed to living a faith-filled life. The Church provides the locus and foundation of my faith identity in so many ways. I thank God that I have not relied solely on the Church for the fostering of my spiritual life and my commitment to justice. I grieve at its current regressive state in many instances, and put my energy into growing a more relevant and authentic faith right on the margins of this regressive institution. I am hopeful that these seeds will penetrate the brick walls that have been and continue to be built around this institution.

Family life, with frequent visits from a priest of our parish, helped me say "Yes" to God's call to priesthood.

Victim—[-] ... may he and all associated with his—placement, re-placement, and protection ([-]) burn in hell.

In my almost eighty years as an active Catholic I have seen far too many priests struggle with alcohol and anxiety disorders. Recently at the golden jubilee of ordination a well-balanced and educated priest told the gathering, "for 50 years I have been a good priest, but I would have been a better one if I could have married"!

As a committed religious woman in an international missionary community for almost 60 years, and a spiritual guide for more than four decades, I have been privileged to share the lives, struggles and questions of many, many individuals and adult faith-development groups in

Australia and elsewhere. The above questions reflect not just my own spiritual search and growth, but those of hundreds (or thousands??) of other Catholics / Christians / and members of other faiths, or none... As Christians, if we can come to know and reflect the true Jesus and his message, we have the most precious gift that our world could ever be offered. But, down through the centuries, we have 'lost the plot' in so many ways... Let's help each other be humble, accept the messages about Creation that today's Science is offering us, use the tools that advances in all disciplines are offering us, and bring Jesus, his life and message, to our searching brothers and sisters on this beautiful Planet. It IS the ERA of the SPIRIT...let's open ourselves to wherever She is taking us!

By participating in the Evenings for the Engaged (in the [-]) and the Ministry to the Newly Married (in [-])—I believe that this program has helped shape, prepare and save my marriage. So many of the marriages around me—especially the ones who have gone through the '300 questionnaire' have collapsed and couples have not embraced their marriage as a sacrament and vocation.

I grew up country town within a thriving and strong Catholic community. I have a very strong faith and I love God. I always wanted to become a nun. I entered the convent as a Postulant at 29 years of age with a university degree and after travelling the world and Australia. I completed all assessments necessary to be accepted as a postulant. Some experiences there gave me insight into the operations of the institution of Church, and I was disappointed. For example one Sunday after Mass 3 seminarians used parlour to chat with a priest about theology. I was asked to stand at the door and top up their teacups when required. I stood there for 3 hours. I was not offered a chair, a drink or invited to share in knowledge. I was not acknowledged by any of the men. During my time I was shown how to lay out vestments for priests and to launder. On Good Friday, I watched nuns get up from the table and leave their plates for a staff member to wash, there was none of the fasting that I practiced at home on Good Friday. I recall having a choice of 13 cereals for breakfast each morning, a luxury I never had outside of the convent. I entered with a beautiful blue woollen Irish jumper and was taken to David Jones to buy replacement cardigan with gold buttons that cost \$250. I will never forget thinking I could never afford this out of the convent. When I told the Mother General that I had decided not to continue my postulancy, I was shown the back door, not allowed to say goodbye or thank the nuns, I had no money, no phone and was 100s of kms from family. I literally was shown the door by a woman who had eaten in my home and experienced my hospitality prior to me entering. I had done nothing wrong at all during my time there and I did not deserve that treatment. These may not seem like much and my leaving can conveniently be explained away as me not having a vocation. My widowed mother gave a huge donation to the convent, and went without to do so. I teach at a Catholic school for [-]. Mass was an important part of my life. My husband and I met in 2001. He was 42 years old, I was 34. He had been married at 18, for 7 months. We were unable to be married in the church that we attended every Sunday (I was a volunteer teacher of the sacramental program). We were told to consider the Annulment process and we did. My husband began the process and gave up, the process was unrealistic and not meaningful to us in any way. We got married civilly. We took our children to Mass weekly for years and I continued to volunteer as the secretary of our P&F and actively fundraised for our school. I can't tell you how horrible it is not to be able to legitimately

receive Communion. We no longer attend Mass. It has little meaning for us or our children any more. We found other ways to serve God and contribute meaningfully to our community. I teach at a [-] school and my enthusiasm after 5 years teaching, is gone as I realise I work for an institution hell bent on protecting itself.

I was fortunate to know priests who connected to our community when I was a teenager but all three of my children and my wife were turned against the Church by priests who were obviously hypocritical and did not connect with families. They were single men with no concept of family life. Our last three parish priests in two different parishes have been wonderful but the damage cannot be undone now. We need to get rid of the self-righteous priests and protect the genuine ones. Genuinely pastoral priests are rarely elevated in the hierarchy so it is perceived as not valued by the Church. Academics who do much damage are [often] elevated.

I was born into a faith-filled, practising Catholic family and went to a Catholic primary school. My family was strong in its Marian devotions and attended Mass every Sunday. However, despite my upbringing and education, I never had any exposure to 'apologetics' or why we do what we do and believe what we believe. Like many others, during my university years (and beyond) I fell away from the Church and, while still attending Mass and identifying myself as Catholic, my lifestyle choices were certainly not in line with the Catholic Church. I wish now that I had had a better understanding of why the Church teaches what it teaches. At the time, it seemed like a lot of arbitrary rules and I lacked a true understanding of the reason and wisdom behind Church teachings. In spite of this (and because I had a love of the Catholic Church despite my ignorance), I became a Catholic primary school teacher. During these years I engaged in premarital sex, used contraception, didn't attend confession and, once married and discovering my infertility, used IVF to conceive my two beautiful children. While there was always an element of guilt involved, I never really understood (or sought out) the Church reasoning and wisdom behind these teachings. I perhaps could have lived my life in quiet justification of my choices, especially now, since having children, I was very committed to raising them in the Catholic faith (despite obviously not understanding it fully myself!). Then the God of surprises threw my a few curve balls. My father, who was a good and faithful man, died somewhat unexpectedly. In the coming months, one of my older brothers who had suffered depression for many years, had a severe psychotic episode to the point where he was hospitalised in a mental health facility. During this time with my brother, I can only say that I had an experience of the evil one. One evening, before my brother's eventual involuntary hospitalisation, I was driving in the car with him, when I became acutely aware that there was another presence in the car with him who was taking delight in my brother's situation and feeding him the many lies which were causing him so much distress. It sounds almost ridiculous to say it now but I became convinced of the evil one's presence in my midst. After dropping my poor brother off to my sister's I spent the car ride home forcefully telling the devil (!) that he would not get his hands on my brother and that I would make sure of it. This experience sent me flying into the arms of the Church. I researched, read, devoured as much as I could about deliverance and the Church's response to evil and, to cut a long story short, found myself truly coming home to the beauty, truth and wisdom of the Catholic Church. I only wish that I had known this sooner but God finds a way in even through pain and suffering. My brother is

doing much better now and the whole experience has brought all my family closer to our loving God.

I think divorced Catholics who are not the cause of their marriage breakdown should be permitted to receive communion. While marriage is a lifelong commitment, when it goes bad then the 'victim' should find refuge in God's gift rather than be cast aside by Church rules. To keep good Catholics away from the Eucharist is extreme, and I think, un-Christian.

When I lost my son to murder I was going to turn to drugs but this priest was quietly sitting beside me and there I felt the Lord's breeze soothe my shattered heart. I felt a cushion around me so now I have that to comfort me and I still remember the priest sitting with me in silence that's what I needed the priest and I was sitting beside my 24 y/o son Russell who was shot in the head and his brain swelled leaking out of the bullet hole. Through this priest I felt Jesus. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you From [-].

In Rockhampton, I took part in a Parish Assembly where the liturgy was discussed. I was shocked when a lady who is well regarded in the Catholic community told me that kneeling during Mass was "pre-Vatican II". Likewise I was confused when despite discussing ideas on how to be more inclusive my suggestion that an Ordinariate Mass be said in the Cathedral as a way of celebrating the conversion of former Anglicans to the Catholic Faith, a success in ecumenism, was rejected outright. Unfortunately I now have the impression that most Catholic laity are open-minded to everything except those things in accord with Catholic doctrine and tradition.

My faith was nurtured from birth by my family. From them I learnt to prioritise fidelity to the teaching of Jesus Christ and his Church. The truth of faith was further reinforced by the example of religious and clerics who were recognisably Catholic in their demeanour and practice of the faith. I did not always agree with them. However I knew that they were to be respected and that the teachings of the Church could be upheld without me liking how it inconvenienced my selfish desires. I attended many Catholic schools, I married a Catholic, raised my children to be Catholic and have every expectation that despite the apostasy of the 80's throughout schools bereft of Catholicity, my prayers for their eventual salvation will be answered. I would not have the strength to continue in the practice of my faith were it not for good parents, good priests and good nuns who grounded me in faith in a practical way prioritising holiness and fidelity and teaching me the means to do so. The frequent confession I so cherish is becoming less likely as the priests disappear. The faithful handing on of the faith is mostly down to us as parents as religious orders retreat from the field. There is a great sadness in my heart because my children and grandchildren now must struggle to be Catholic in a world set more and more against them.

My first recollection of the faith revolves around being sick as a 4yr old. My Father took me to the outpatients from [-] to [-]. We were seen by a nursing Nun who was so calm and kind and yet efficient. I decided at that moment I wanted to be like her and minister to the sick in the same way. My Father realised that it was a turning point for me and he encouraged me telling me stories on the long journeys on public transport. I grew up in a home where the daily Rosary was an important part of the day, where we were taken to Sunday Mass regardless of difficulties, daily when we were older and able to get there ourselves. Sacraments meant something to me—my parents believed in them, my teachers (all religious) taught me that and modelled reverence and

sanctity, as did the clergy who administered the sacraments. May I point out that neither they nor were we perfect in our daily lives, however I received consistent truthful witness regarding the unity of Catholic teaching and the importance of living the faith in the world. I became a registered nurse many years later and was practising until I retired last year, over 40 years. I can honestly say that neither Catholic schooling or nurse training is anything like what I experienced and I grieve for today's youth searching for Catholic witness in vain. My parents welcomed 8 children and God blessed my husband and I with 9—respect for life and witness to that principle is a driving force in my life as I endeavour to encourage the young parents of today in their marriages and families.

In my latter years, I have seen and experienced greater spiritual awareness, playfulness and belief within other Christian religious groups that I have had the good fortune to be associated with. They outshine many Catholics by the strength of their faith.

The lives of religious sisters and nuns who have had an effect on me their strength in the face of a male dominated Church.

My early faith was nurtured in the home by both parents—my father a convert. I attended 12 years at Catholic schools—some teachers there also influenced me because they were open to young people's ideas and respected them. They were alas a minority. I found University study a great help in discerning my attitudes to Church and its functions. My attendance at Mass is the summit and source of what I believe and try to live by—oft times not well.

I married a Lutheran. She is a Christian, and she attends Mass more than a lot of Catholics, yet the doctrine of the Church excludes here from having communion. Doesn't really make sense. There were no Catholics and Lutherans when Jesus was breaking bread with the disciples. We believe in the same God. What it has done is fuelled negative emotions, emotions of exclusion, within my wife. This makes it harder for us to go to Mass as a family. I would like to see the Catholic Church embrace and welcome people from other denominations as their own. I am sure this would assist in allowing families to attend Church as one where a Catholic has married someone from another denomination.

At the moment my experience of the Church in Australia is leading me to question why I should remain part of the Church. I will always believe in God but from my perspective the Church is now more like a business rather than the Church that Jesus wanted Peter to build so as to continue His work.

I am currently participating in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, which is a form of prayer conducted either during a 30-day retreat, or in my case, in daily life over the course of a year. The program consists in walking through the Gospel stories with Jesus and the other characters and imagining yourself in the scene. This is a powerful method of prayer, as it focuses on experiencing Jesus through your senses and emotions, as well as your intellect. I understand why this practice was so revolutionary when St Ignatius and the first Jesuits introduced it to the Church in a time of crisis, just after the Reformation. The experience makes the person of Jesus Christ real—He is alive in our daily life, here and now. Perhaps this realisation of the Risen Lord Jesus present, here and now, is the experience that the Church in Australia needs, following its own crisis in recent years. Until my discovery of the Spiritual Exercises, I had devotion to Jesus

through the faith taught to me by my parents, the Catholic school and later the diocesan seminary; but this was a received view. I accepted what others taught me about Jesus and his Church. I came to know about Jesus, but I didn't know Jesus well himself, as a person. Specifically, in the seminary I was taught to distrust my emotions and feelings in prayer and decision-making, and to focus on the teachings of the Magisterium and of approved spiritual writers. I remember some of the priest lecturers had a fear of women, which I assume was to safeguard their celibacy, and they taught some seminarians to avoid unnecessary contact with women. I later left the seminary, which was now almost 20 years ago. My lecturers meant well and were acting from what they had learnt and experienced. I bear them no ill will. My concern is that other men who became priests and leaders in the Church may have followed this mindset of distrusting their feelings and also to be wary and aloof around women. If my concerns are realised and this mindset has persisted in the hierarchy, I can understand why some Church leaders have often failed in their responses to pastoral problems and cases of abuse. It has left many people alienated and angry at the Church, which they view as an unfeeling and out-of-touch institution. A return to heartfelt prayer and honest dialogue with fellow Christians—regardless of gender, state of life and age—is needed to counter these ongoing problems in the Church. The best programs and presentations in preparation for this Council will be those that encourage conversion, and a personal relationship with God. Only God can, and will, restore us as a community to love him and each other from the heart once again. This love necessarily includes courageously speaking the truth with respect, and challenging ideas and traditions hostile to the Gospel message of freedom in the Lord.

Only the music of the liturgy, the service of Catholic schools, and the heritage of my ancestry continue to connect me with Church.

I had an influential priest and Christian brother who taught me about Christ's message through working for the poor and marginalised. I have carried the lessons learned throughout my life and career. Ironically, the sense of social justice and love of Christ's message instilled in me has also left me horrified by the lack of justice and love that I see from the hierarchical Church which has lost touch with their people.

I was born of a Catholic Father and a Church of England Mother who were not married in a Catholic Church. Because of this they were not considered to be married and so my Dad never went to Church but insisted that I attend a Catholic School. I had great respect for the nuns and feel they were responsible for my faith. During the whole time I attended the school and worked in the Church I never ever experienced any abuse. I have however heard horrific stories from other people about how they were treated by the priests and nuns. I have always gone to Mass and tried to live by the rules of the Church until I had 5 pregnancies in 5 years. I was emotionally very distraught and felt I could not continue having children. I decided not to attend Church at this point in time much to the concern of my husband. A few weeks later I was visited by a young priest who listened to my story and told me that I had to make my own decision about the rest of my life. It was then that I took the pill, which I know is forbidden but felt that if I kept on having children I would end up in a mental asylum. I would like to see priests able to marry.

I had an experience of a complete turnaround; from depression and self-loathing after a small accident (due to a kind of carelessness); no one was hurt, but I considered what might have

happened. I am always hard on myself. The following Sunday after receiving Holy Communion the burden was lifted, and I walked out of Church in joy and profound peace. Never before or after have I felt quite that level of consolation. We need to have frequent Exposition, benediction, rosary, not just try to fit in with other faiths who have turned their back on these things, God love them.

It has been necessary to import priests from other cultures. Because of language it is difficult to understand their homilies and for them to understand our culture and customs.

I am a recent convert from Anglicanism, my father was a priest and that's how I was raised. I fell away from the Anglican Church because I found it wasn't fulfilling my needs. I was left wanting and the teachings and practices of the Church hierarchy disturbed me greatly. I attempted to find my faith again with the Catholic Church, but what I found was so similar to what I had left behind that I was very discouraged. I will repeat for emphasis. The Catholic Church, as I experienced it, was so reminiscent of the protestants that I very nearly quit right there and then. Until I found the TLM in [-], [-]. Within I discovered everything I was missing, everything I didn't know that I was missing. It was like I had come up for air for the first time in years. The beauty, the reverence, the pure and obvious devotion of the congregation overwhelmed me immediately and I swore I would never go back. I was saved that day. But I was very nearly left to drown by the lukewarm, watered down milquetoast approximation of the Mass that was being served to me.

I lived in a Christian community and worked for Church bureaucracies for 20 years. It has been both inspiring and damaging to my well-being—but I am still working through this. I also found faith in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue—I would like to see the Church clarify what it means by evangelisation, it sounds quite different to evangelism. Joseph Pearce's book about CS Lewis and the Catholic Church could be a good way of building bridges between Catholics and Protestants. Baptist scholar Athol Gill's "The Fringes of Freedom" is another good source. We could all learn from the Quakers about silence and the Taize community about prayer.

I am a Catholic school teacher and see every day the uniqueness of the students attending Catholic schools. Yet, I do not see these students, or their parents, connecting to the Church because of the restrictions put in place. A lot of families now have divorced parents, there are more and more same sex families, there are families who are not married—yet they do not feel welcome in the Church. I myself have been with my partner for 4 years, we love each other dearly but have decided to not get married—I do not know if I have job security if I should fall pregnant, even though our child would be loved and cared for and brought up with God in their heart. How is this showing unity in the 21st century?

I grew up in a parish that embraced Vatican II and then watched the Church become hijacked by conservatives who wanted the Church to be exclusive rather than inclusive. It made me not want to be a part of a Church so divorced from the teachings of Jesus. My faith in God is more important to me than membership of the Church and that is what gives me hope.

I have always had a strong Christian faith. I love Jesus with all my heart. However, I'm also LGBT. The Church currently will not openly accept or welcome me because of my sexuality. It hurts me because I want to join with my fellow Christians and worship openly in a community where I feel welcomed and loved, but the Church teaches that for me to be in a relationship I am sinful. Must I

really be single and celibate all my life? Doesn't God teach us that we're all equal? Doesn't Jesus love us all equally? Isn't a monogamous relationship the ideal? If there is genuine love, what's so wrong with that?

As an anti-Catholic protestant for over 40 years, Catholics I knew told me absolutely NOTHING about Catholic faith. I don't think they knew. So when I was called to become Catholic, I was stunned, and more than a little sceptical. Still, I made a deal with God. I told Him that I would only become Catholic if I couldn't find anything wrong with the Catholic Church—using nothing but my protestant Bible and comparing it with the Catechism. Without exception, He showed me, in my protestant Bible: priests, mortal sin, saints, the primacy of Peter (who, I discovered is specifically named over 195 times—while the next most-mentioned Apostle that spent time with Jesus, John, is named less than 30) ... the list just went on and on. I was in RCIA before I even realised what the Reformation was—and when I realised Jesus hadn't started my Baptist Church (that we didn't descend from John the Baptist, and couldn't possibly have been the "one Church" Jesus started with Peter) I couldn't become Catholic fast enough. All this, because NO Catholic ever told me anything—for over 40 years, in two countries (Australia and NZ). Conversely, I could tell you a great deal of what was in scripture—and I have few inhibitions with evangelising (Jesus went out of His way for me, the least I can do is to share my love for Him with others whom I come across).

Many cradle Catholics I've met (I grew up Protestant and have only been Catholic 5 years) don't even know what a Catechism is, let alone have read one. They are shocked to hear an ex protestant speak of Catholic beliefs with such authority—all because I went through RCIA. Every Catholic should have access to a similar faith-education course, Bible studies etc.—even just an "RCIA" called something else so cradle Catholics feel more comfortable with it—we'd all be incredibly blessed! I recently went through an Alpha course—it was amazing. The Holy Spirit really worked through us, spoke through us, and is already at work in the world ... one lady I met has taken rosary beads from our parish to a hospice. Another man has taken holy water to a men's outreach. God is working, and it's wonderful.

The story of faith for me has been a quest to find the Holy Grail that is love. That has been my challenge and guiding light throughout my journey. Once I fell into Love then all the rules and regulations became much less important.

I know, I believe, I am spiritually aware that the Catholic Church is gifted with the one True God, with Jesus, and with the one True Spirit. IN GOD'S GOOD TIME HE MARRIES EACH INDIVIDUAL AND THEY BECOME ONE FOR ALL ETERNITY. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF GOD.

I was baptised a Catholic at birth. Dad was a Catholic and Mum was Anglican. We lived in [-]. I was 7 when my Dad left for the Middle East in the 2nd World War. When Dad returned around 1943 he suffered from what they now call PTSD and was admitted to [-] military psychiatric Hospital where he remained until 1958. Legacy was a great support for Mum and my brother and I. The Teresians who visited the "Public" school to give religious lessons called on my mother and convinced her that I should be confirmed. My brother and I then changed schools and enrolled in [-]. We subsequently moved to [-] and attended Marist Brothers [-]. Sometime in the early 1950s Mum was joyfully accepted into the Catholic Church. I married [-] (a fellow member of [-] C.Y.O.) in 1956. We had 4 children (a son and 3 daughters). They attended good Catholic Colleges.

I became a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul—President of [-] ([-]) Conference and later Regional President of the [-] Diocesan Council; My wife and I joined Mary of Pentecost Charismatic Prayer Meeting in [-] parish around 1974. I became the Leader of the Prayer Group in 1975. In the meantime my business career was also progressing. I worked and studied as a Real Estate Valuer—residential, commercial, industrial and rural. Over a number of years I worked [in various organisations in a number of cities]. We transferred to [-] in order to join [-] Community. In the Community I worked in the Administration Office for several years and later transferred within [-] to become [-]'s (the Community leader) personal assistant. [-] was also President of the [-]—an international grouping of similar Catholic Charismatic groups from many countries all over the world. We planned and organised many international Conferences—all in Italy during my term. [-] was well known in Rome hierarchical circles and had support from a number of Cardinals. I edited a number of Charismatic Newsletters over the years from 1970 on and for the [-]. It was an honour and a privilege to work with and for him. I wrote [-] detailing my experiences from boyhood to my time with [-] and a smaller publication [-] with a series of small one or two page spiritual reflections.

I could write about 2 cases for including the divorced and re-married but it would take too long.

Experience of "Church" with regard to Language! As far back as 1977, I was aware of language exclusion in Church situations and I was committed to and an active advocate/constant practitioner of "inclusive language"! I recall being the only female member of the Catholic Education Commission here in [-] from 1977 for several years. Father [-] was the gentle, kind and sensitive "Chair" of the commission. I was the "classroom" representative and all other members were the priests representing each Diocese of [-]. My language was always "inclusive" which resulted in amusement from the priests, patronizing attitudes and advice that "really, language is an insignificant issue"! Because I believe that "words are powerful" I continued to persevere without much success. In my school environment for 22 years, there was considerable success especially when I was on the Administration Team. From Secondary School, I was at [-] working with pre-service teachers for 17 years and, here inclusive language became the norm. Now, in 2018, many (if not most) readers at Mass happily address the congregations as "Brothers". How sad!

Well yes and no, I wanted my good health to continue, I wanted my wealth restored lost from gambling and I wanted to be in love again, so I asked Jesus to help me to give up smoking, and I do not give credit to three days' worth of patches, maybe, but what I do give credit to is the gospel reading where Jesus said to the blind man you have to tell me what you want, and that is what I did, so I asked to help to give up smoking after 45yrs of 20 + a day ,so health , wealth, have come, Love I am still waiting for of the physical kind, I love you my God, did you forget about me.

I recently was in the position where I was part of a community that had to defend a chapel from being repurposed in part into a cafe and dining room for an aged care facility. The defence was against [-] who should have known better that a historical and spiritual place, the home of perpetual adoration in [-] for over a century should be respected, not demeaned. The proposed alterations and repurposing would have meant that weddings and funerals would have to enter the chapel through the cafe. Such was the uproar in the community, that over 7,500 Catholics were enraged and engaged on social media inside 3 days of it being posted. Despite this

resounding response, the Archdiocese of [-] refused to engage or support the community, referring us back to [-] at every turn. If the Archdiocese did not want to help the community then, why would anyone consider that this Plenary process is anything other than a faux method to bring about changes in the Church that have already been decided. It is clear to at least 7,500 [-] Catholics that the archdiocese has no real interest in what we think.

I have no grand story to tell (I am only 17, after all), but being part of the young generation where the Church has become something to scoff at and decry makes it very apparent that God has fallen out of fashion—as if a trend or fad. It's concerning, that beliefs have become so polarised that Christianity is considered something to show disgust towards, and that it is an enemy to the rights of human beings. How did our ministry of love and tolerance, preached so passionately by Jesus, end up as an enemy to the tenets it teaches? Why have we become instead viewed as tyrannical and interfering? The disconnect between the Church and the more open and accepting practices of society is only forced wider by the Church's publicised and demonised views on issues such as homosexuality—and it becomes harder to profess one's faith every day. It has gotten to the stage where it is assumed among my peers that every one of us is atheistic—and the loss of the young generation is a blow that the Church cannot afford to take. I find myself often unable to mention my faith, often even ridiculed for it. I attend a Catholic school and yet sit in a church full of classmates who will not perform the Sign of the Cross. The Church seems to have become synonymous with foolhardiness and regressive idiocy, which only makes it that much easier to lower one's head and say "Of course I don't believe in God, who does that?!" I don't believe denial should have to be a fall back for anyone, and it rather shamefully brings to mind the rooster crowing three times every time I find myself doing so. I certainly don't adhere to many of the Church's teachings on my own behalf—being a transgendered young man, I often find myself confused by the apparent clash between my faith and the fact that I know God intended me to be a young man, rather than the woman I was born as. I can only hope that the Plenary Council may help direct the Church's vision in a way that halts the crumble of the Church's standing in the eyes of my generation, and makes it no longer shameful to say "I believe in God."

I converted to Catholicism when I was 19 yrs old, as I had huge admiration of the priests and was in awe of the faithful. Sadly as I struggled along with trying to comply with the demands of the faith I fell a little by the way for many years. About 20 years ago I started to get my act together and became much more active, attending Mass and participating in the sacraments. Unfortunately due to the voluminous recent reports of abuse, and massive cover up and denial by those in charge, among other things I became so dismayed and disappointed to say the least! In the middle of all this I discovered that my brother was also a victim of such abuse, which has been another demon for him as he struggles with self-harm, Schizophrenia and now metastatic cancer. All of this made me struggle to continue to admit I was a Catholic and affected my ability to support the faith and have respect for those in charge. Despite having said this, I decided to continue to keep up my faith, as I trust in God, and I know he does not support what has been going on, apparently for centuries. If the Catholic Church is really to survive, especially in this country, there need to be a quantum leap of change. Sending people off to get Blue Cards and running program designed to 'educate' people about appropriate behaviour around children will not cut it! Australians are very 'laid back' but they will only tolerate a 'fair go' and it is currently

<p>not happening on many fronts and especially in the hierarchy and management of the Catholic Church, not only in Australia but I believe worldwide. Time to really 'step up to the mark'.</p>
<p>As a man old enough to remember what the Church was like before the upheavals wrought by misinterpretations of Vatican II (the so-called 'spirit of Vatican II') I remember how I was shaped and inspired by the Latin Mass, by Gregorian Chant, by missionaries who emphasized the seriousness of sin and who inspired us to try and do better, by the long lines at confession, by a Church which produced manly and forthright priests, by the emphasis on various devotions, by a Church which was vigorous, outspoken and courageous. Today, the Church is riven with division, with scandals, with doctrinal confusion, with uncertainty about its future. It is high time for our clergy to speak with a clear, strong voice about what the Church stands for.</p>
<p>After 40+ years in missionary countries and leaving my beloved Church and country I must say that when I arrived home about a year ago I was shocked at the change within the country and Church. I still feel like a refugee myself so I am wondering what has happened as we have everything and more but Christianity seems to be dead. Why I ask What has happened to our Faith and practice? Presently it seems to be the seniors that are carrying the Church and I don't think they get much recognition or help. Retreat days, days of prayer, direction for most people is too expensive I pray that through the grace of God and the Plenary Council we can reclaim our souls, hearts and faith again within and outside the Church. Fear, fear of our past and of the media is stopping us as Church as people from standing up for what is right at times we seem to have a culture of Silence and that perhaps we are dying. Not So Once again I call for Renewal and to bring about a new and lively evangelisation to meet the signs of the times. Once I sent in a request to a bishop in a certain state perhaps we could bring in again a prayer after Mass for world peace, reparation and conversion as Our Blessed Mother has asked. Sad to say I received no reply. From Proclaiming the Gospel ...</p>
<p>I believe what has shaped my faith is the knowledge of my families' history, their contributions, their faith and love for God and the wisdom they shared with me. I also have been reading lots on St Mary Mackillop, her strength and courage has made me believe that God has a plan for all of us and his plan will be greater than our own.</p>
<p>I am a "cradle" Catholic and have been gifted throughout my life with my ongoing faith. I can't understand why so many of my peers have abandoned theirs.</p>
<p>Too late .. sorry. Move on.</p>
<p>The Blessed Mother has been the occasion of an event in my life that has changed my life. It was in response to prayer, a prayer I have found difficult to reach since but at the time it was a prayer of real faith and dependence. Mary responded within 24 hours and a person came into my life that changed me. She also left my life some 2 years later but that too was part of the response from Mary and for the good of the woman and for my good too.</p>
<p>What has shaped my experience as a Catholic is the erosion of faith which has occurred in my four children and their cousins—all of whom are in their 30s and 40s.</p>
<p>Yes. I love being a Catholic. We are the first Church and we are the only Church because God has only one Church. The Church broke up to form other denominations (God hates divorce—this was</p>

like a divorce of the Church). Jesus said there is only one Church and so I find that each Christian denomination has something missing because it all belongs together and each denomination has a part of the whole. Each denomination has a particular strength: one has evangelism, another tradition, or teaching and missionary works. I attended different Christian Churches at different times because I enjoyed their sermons but I missed our traditional Mass and especially the holiness of Holy Communion. The importance of the presence of the altar and the sacrifice of Jesus is made significant by the sacrificial altar and the priest blessing the Eucharist—the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I feel the Church is losing the message of the importance of asking for the forgiveness of your sins (naming the sin and event) before receiving communion. I know that I belong in the Catholic Church because I had to defend my Church from Christians who suggested that we worship idols like Mary and Saints and we have demonic emblems, illuminati influences and so on. I still don't have all the answers but I began to look for and listen to apologetics of the faith. Unfortunately I could not find any appealing Catholic apologetics but Hugh Ross, John Lennox, John McArthur and David Pawson have helped me understand that Christians will always feel apart from the rest of society and that the Church survives and grows quickly when it is under attack from the outside but the danger for the Church's survival is attack from within by changing The Word or bending God's laws to suit the outside world and I can see from their teaching that the Catholic Church (they all do not like the Catholics very much) has not bent its religious teachings and traditions to suit the outside world. We do not entertain the congregation from a stage in a theatre just to increase numbers in the congregation. The Catholic Church is global but I would like more than a Mass from my Church. The deliverance of the gospel is a simple reading, a one liner on the message and we move on. The teaching would be interesting if we can think of how the message impacts our personal life and how we behave. The priests are sometimes very difficult to understand which means we leave Mass without a message or thought for the day.

There have been so many occasions when I have experienced the love and mercy of God. There were times when I was completely overwhelmed by circumstances again and again and it was then again and again that God came to my aid. Yes I agree with the ancient Jew who said in admiration; what God is as great as our God. The book of Ecclesiastes Chapter 2 verse 11 written more than 2000 years sums it all up especially for today's world; No one has ever trusted in the Lord and been confounded. And that is so, so true in my 65 years of living experience.

I was baptised Catholic, attended both State and Convent schools, married in the Catholic Church, and brought up my children as Catholics. When my husband died about 20 years ago, I felt that I needed something else to keep me in the Church community. A friend introduced me to Christian meditation, and I soon became involved in the WCCM—World Community for Christian Meditation. To me, it was an answer to what I had been looking for. I have led 2 parish groups since 2001 and attended 6 retreats led by Dom [-]. The framework of the community is a perfect model for Christianity to follow. John Main said that silence creates community and my experience within the Church since I began meditation in 1999 has convinced me that he was right. Our community is truly ecumenical and it has proven that we can have a monastery without walls for lay people who choose to follow the monastic path in their own lives, whether married or single.

As a small child I was taught to be afraid of God. As I grew, through my association with the NCGM and other movements and my life experience and my relationship with God, I discovered just how much my God loved me freely. I have been fortunate to have known many priests who have been real pastors and men of God. I have also experienced others who have not. This is an observation not a judgement.

My Faith was shaped in the Catholic Church as a child at Primary school (taught by Nuns) and at high school run by Sacred Heart priests) in England. I emigrated to Australia in 1966 as a 21 year old the attitude for the Church was the same here in those days, full Churches, schools managed by clergy, hospitals with clergy at the helm.

I grew up in the pre-Vatican Church. As a young religious Sister I lived through the years of Vatican Council II. My tertiary studies were in science and theology. I taught secondary science and religious education for 25 years before spending 11 plus years as university chaplain—an interfaith ministry. For almost 13 years I have been in pastoral ministry in rural and remote parts of [-] (a ministry which developed from the former aerial ministry which ended in 2001). What I have written in the attachment and on a former occasion come from my perspective, my experience most especially with those in remote rural parts of our country, most of whom are Christian of one denomination or another and most of whom only rarely if ever go to a church building. Please read the attachment. Simply put, I believe that "mission" rather than "parish" best describes the approach to ministry required. Thank you.

I was a nominal Catholic, attending Mass, the sacraments etc. when in 1972 I was prayed for by a humble priest to receive The Baptism in the Holy Spirit. My life changed dramatically ... a love of The Liturgy, Scripture, the Catholic Church as my mother, a desire to serve my brothers and sisters ... no without experiencing many trials and tests, but always having an inner conviction in the everlasting love of my Heavenly Father, continuing to grow in my commitment to love and serve in Jesus' Name ... and with the support of like-minded Catholics with whom I share, pray on a weekly basis. Thank you.

Married young to a wonderful man and had four children with him. I was widowed at 32 years of age. Some six years later I remarried a widower with three children. The relationship was an emotional nightmare and then I received a black eye, so I left. I divorced him. As a divorced woman, I could not take communion, as I was taught this all my life. Some fourteen years later I met a wonderful man but could not marry him in the Church as I was divorced and so was he, so we had a marriage celebrant. Needless to say, my involvement in the Church consists of Mass at Easter and Christmas as I feel I no longer have a right to be there. I think there would be a lot of other folk who grew up in my era and feel the same. Something has to change!!!

The students shared some of the following stories. At our school we have a project called "Genesis" that sells reusable bags and mugs to use at the café. The students talked about how the Rhinos are treated when they remove their horns which cause them to die. They also talked about how the Orangutans have been run over, with malicious intent, when they are cutting down palm oil trees.

Each member of our group has experienced a unique journey of discipleship, coming to the Church by birth or by conversion, and has been imbued by the Spirit of the Second Vatican

Council, which re-calibrated the relationship between the ordained and unordained in the Church, status giving way to function (Decree on the Laity #3; Decree on Ministry and Life of priests #9). We were struck by a recent (de-identified) notice in a parish bulletin: "Please note the following while Fr X is on holidays: There will be no country Masses on the following Saturdays next month: NO MASSES ON THESE DATES: XX Church—6 October; YY Church -13 October; ZZ Church—20 October. There will be no Masses at AA or BB (Aged Care facilities) for the month of October. If there are any emergencies while Fr X is on holidays, please contact Fr [Y] or Fr [Z]. (We noted: each resides 30+ km from parish Centre)." This notice is consistent with the identification of the priest as having an exclusive sacramental prerogative and is a standard type of notice seen in traditional parishes when the priest is absent. However, it takes no account of the opportunities for the formation of smaller Eucharistic communities who may celebrate, even under current legislation, appropriate liturgies of the Word with Communion, when the priest is away. Furthermore it takes no account of the possibilities of developing pastoral ministries involving the unordained in wider contexts. In this vein, our group was encouraged by the ideas espoused by Bishop Emeritus Fritz Lobinger who envisages ministry undertaken by teams of elders, sacramentally appointed but NOT ordained clerics in the traditional sense. Based on models from the earliest days of Christianity, their ministry is localised to one parish or community under the guidance of 'animator priests' whose function is similar to that of spiritual advisor. They will not be replacement priests who come from outside, but members from the local community who promote Christian fellowship centred on the Eucharist, over which they are able to preside. For more details on Lobinger's vision, see Appendix to this submission, especially Endnote 2. Where appropriate pastoral opportunities are provided for those who have experienced any of the renewal programs offered since the Second Vatican Council, communities have succeeded in maintaining the momentum of the renewal experience, and the communities are vibrant and alive. They grow, where a breadth of ministries is encouraged and responsibility given. A clergy-centred model of Church where the laity are called essentially to 'pay, pray, and obey', results in a disconnect between congregation and leadership, and the force of authority no longer has the power to ensure conformity, except in isolated pockets of reaction. Circumstances have conspired to provide an opportunity for the Australian Church to test new structures. We hope that this opportunity is taken, and that we can step out, in faith.

The Catholic Church in Australia is a very welcoming one and has a lot of good history of inclusion. It is less polarized than other ecclesial spaces I have worked in. So it could mark a sensible and real pathway forward.

I stopped believing in Christianity after reading the Bible.

My faith and the Church has helped shaped me by guiding me through my everyday life.

Much of the above submission has come as a result of our personal experiences. The people around us are a huge influence be they family or friends of faith or not. Are we guided and shaped by our faith or do our life experiences lead us in that direction? I think there is a crossover of life of faith and our life of others! Hopefully Jesus is there in the mix guiding us in our faith and in our life.

Yes I have been in a Catholic school and have been bullied, the school itself did nothing about however I have found few people who have stood up for me. I have truly experienced the Good Samaritan story personally.

I work doing Christian Religious Instruction in the State Schools and work with people from other Denominations. I have known a Baptist Reverend and his wife for many years. She is knowledgeable of the Bible. I find they work well as a team and she is an asset to him. Another in the group thought if there was an emergency which would the Catholic priest choose?

Experiencing World Youth Day in Sydney, 2008 sparked my journey towards a life lived for Christ outside of the Church building. It was this initial experience that led me on to finding Jesus personally in my life. Many ongoing events in [-] including [-] and [-] Conference have continually helped me sustain my faith.

We have heard of a parish, maybe a combination of two parishes, in the central, coastal [-] area, that does not have a permanent priest. The parish is lay administered and it sources and engages a priest for weekend Eucharistic liturgies. The amazing thing was that this parish had delegates at the [-] conference.

- In the Year of Mercy, [-], [-], established “Mercy Fellowship”, held on the last Friday of the month. It has energized the parish through its Songs of Worship, Proclamation and Breaking Open the Word, Personal Testimony, Adoration, Prayer Ministry and Supper.
- The joy in sharing the love of the Lord and the Word of God through RCIA and the sacramental program is a powerful experience for me.
- The annual [-] Conferences held in [-] were occasions when international theologians extended our knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. My faith was nurtured through these conferences and I am very sorry they have been discontinued. This is one avenue that has the potential to renew people in their walk with the Lord and so is a wise investment. I pray that opportunities like these may again be made available. It is obvious that the Church at all levels needs education and support to deepen our faith and walk with God.
- [-] have been a prayerful support, an “extended family”, and an opportunity for growth.
- The Word Among Us has been a personal help bringing the blessing of being in the Lord’s presence through meditation on the daily Scripture readings of the Church. I was disappointed that many parish priests whom I contacted were not prepared to encourage their people to take this opportunity of taking time each day to immerse themselves in the daily readings from the Word of God.
- As a Catholic school principal and a parish catechist, I have been deeply saddened when some priests refuse the Sacraments of Initiation to children if the parents do not commit to regular Mass attendance. I have had parents in tears telling me how deeply hurt they have been by the abrupt/rude way the priest has spoken to them. They have said they will never go to Church again. This is not the welcome given us by God. Both parents and children are scarred by this treatment. On the other hand, many parents who sign the commitment and attend Mass during preparation for the sacraments, do not continue to participate once the child has received the sacraments. I understand the argument that sacraments of Initiation are only the beginning of a

life-long journey, but the sacraments give a special grace. God is able to ignite the flickering light when the time is ripe. That's God's work, not ours.

Prior to my transferring my adherence to the Catholic Tradition (over 40 years ago) I was a lay preacher in the Presbyterian Church when our parish was without a Minister. My early Christian education was derived from the Methodist Church. Prior to becoming a member of the Catholic Church, I was an active member of the Liturgy Committee, A Reader of the Word, the parish representative on the bishop's Ecumenical Commission, as well as being Area Coordination (with my then wife) of the [-]. For good measure, the parish priest who was well aware of my background, requested me to be a sponsor for an RCIA candidate, which I gladly did. In my travels around Australia, I have found parishioners are concerned about the well-being of their fellow parishioners, their demonstration that they ARE the real Church, the clear impact is that endeavour to live the teachings of Jesus. Most do not take Rome too seriously—they are over there ... let's get on with doing the real work of proclaiming the Gospel. Over the years my faith has deepened. There is no doubt that the teachings of Jesus, from all the different Traditions, has permeated and enriched my life. When faced with a challenge, my thoughts turn to ... "What would Jesus do?"

It was some years ago, at a time when my faith was not particularly strong, when a new parish priest was assigned to my parish. That man was a genuine servant of God—no airs or graces, no expectation that parishioners would bow to his authority, but rather a man who was humble, preached the simple messages of Christ, showed real compassion for the poor in the parish through actual works of charity, and who assisted his parishioners to grow their faith. That experience changed me as a person, as it did many others.

When I was a young man I used to go to Church but did not know why just frighten that I may go to hell if I didn't but I had a longing for something more. I knew deep down there had to be more than the boring faces I used to see at Mass each Sunday. I read a book by John Powell called he touched me. I remember in the book he said he felt like the town pump. People coming to him and always wanting something and he just felt drained and he was ready to give up. He knelt down in the chapel by himself on day and said to the Lord help me I cannot go on. He suddenly was filled with power and burning in his body and felt inspired. He left the chapel that day a changed man. His life was never the same. He had an experience of the risen Christ and that changed everything. He went on to become a dynamic priest full of life. I remember reading that book and saying to myself well that has certainly not happened to me. I wonder if it could? I went into my room and closed the door and asked Jesus if he could come into my life like John Powell. To my surprise I too had this warm feeling go right through my body and I felt strangely happy. The next day when I went to church everything came alive for me. I could understand the scriptures and was able to really listen to the words of the Mass and enjoyed singing the songs. This experience led me to seeking more. I read Richards Rohr's book on building community. He had mentioned in his book that if you want to really experience life to the full you need to get out of the boat and start walking on the water and trust Jesus. He had started a community in America called the New Jerusalem community. My dad being a school teacher was reading books about the 2nd Vatican council and the new movements and the charismatic renewal that was starting to happen around the world. He advised me to be careful not to join a cult. He said there

was a community in [-] called [-]. I rang this community and was invited to come and see. I was enthusiastic, I left my job and came up in my car with my brother from Victoria and made a holiday of it taking two weeks to arrive. My brother flew home. I was welcomed into a family's home who were very kind to me. The next day we went to church with the community members and I remember walking in and looking around and as the Mass started they were all singing and smiling and were engaged. I remember thinking, this is what I have been looking for all my life. I felt Jesus alive this them. Later on I discovered that Emanuel means God with us and that is exactly what I felt. Well the years roll I met my beautiful wife [-] and married. Now 30 years later still married and in love and with 3 young adult children I will still never forget my first encounter with Jesus that changed my life forever. This is the type of encounter the Church can provide to encourage for our young people and even our not so young people. As John Powell said Jesus is the answer what ...

I love the Church, its people, its faith. I watch quietly at 43 that I am considered young to the point I lead a Youth Group. Whilst I am not embarrassed in my Faith, I am disappointed that after the Commission of Enquiry to Sexual Abuse the formal Church decided to hide in the people's Church and not take accountability but asked all of us to pray for our failings. We will see whether we have created a second temple that we do not have the humility to undo, and restructure through, by its own admission has to be inclusive of all people from all walks of life. Jesus did his best work when breaking bread, he broke it with pagans, Jews, sinners and even drank at midday from a Samaritan, yet we still exclude God's people from our table that need it most. It is enshrined and followed from medieval ages and it's a celebration of exclusivity and shows a Church that does not practice generous orthodoxy. I have no doubt the above lines will raise the same consternation as when Jesus invited himself to the Tax Collectors house, but that's why Jesus did it. To remind us that God is inclusive, not exclusive. If we want to know what Jesus would do, our answers are in the very pages he died so what we could believe.

I was brought up with a Lutheran father and a Catholic mother. We never went to regular Mass but I was given a wonderful education by the Christian Brothers. They instilled my Faith. Most of my class mates who went to Mass every Sunday (+) and were altar boys now have nothing to do with the Church. Even one who became a priest has left and is completely disillusioned. I have always held my Faith but unfortunately my marriage did not last. (she left me) I applied for an annulment but was refused. I have remarried—on the advice of a couple of compassionate priests! Even had a priest refuse to give me absolution. But officially we cannot receive Communion. Considerate and passionate priests, both here and in the US, where we live half of the year have had a wonderful influence on our lives, irrespective of the hard line rules made by unmarried old men.

I was raised in an active Catholic Family my mother converted to marry. I went to Catholic schools conducted by the Charity Sisters and Marist Brothers. I entered the [-] Juniorate for 4 years left after becoming ill and hospitalised. Join the workforce, the Catholic Youth Organisation. Continued to service at Mass as a senior servicer becoming a Special Minister, and Acolyte. Taking Holy Communion to the sick and nursing homes. Preparing the altar for Mass. I have been a member of the St Vincent de Paul for 50 years in [-], [-] and [-].

I thank God that I was brought up in Europe and have a great love of the Church, because there was beauty, silence and we had a High Mass every Sunday. We had Benediction every Sunday afternoon with the music and incense, I have still a great love for the Mass. Father came to our class and taught us all the about the Mass. Look at the many people from overseas, they all have experienced the beauty of the Church. It is such a shame that so many things were thrown out after Vatican II. The communion rail. They brought it back in [-], and it works beautifully and [by the] way much quicker than all the communion minister and keeps the Sanctuary sacred. We cannot put Our Lord in the back of the Church. It is His place why build a Church for who?

Please listen to A Mother's Heartfelt plea I have been wondering for a long time why my 4 children lost their faith while at Catholic schools, in spite of us both being from large Catholic families, and bringing our children up going to Mass every Sunday. Our parents on both sides were Catholic and married in the 50s. The Church of then and now is markedly different, as is the world we live in. After all, we were taught by nuns and priests and most of society was Christian. I never expected as a parent to have to argue with a nun with responsibility for Catholic Education and plead with a bishop to try to stop them introducing a sex education curriculum into our children's Catholic primary school, and to fail. The curriculum was devoid of the Catholic moral teachings, and young teachers given the responsibility that should have been imparted by parents in private. As a result, in high school my son reported they had been taught by a visiting Planned Parenthood speaker how to put on a condom for use on their 3rd date. By the time they left high school and moved to Uni, none were practising their faith. None seem to currently believe in God and are happy to live in the sexual mores of the rest of society, including one in the gay lifestyle, and think our moral beliefs antiquated and pity us for them and attempt to talk us out of them. I love them deeply, I want their salvation, but they are adults and all I can do is pray. Society is so different now from when we were young. However, after listening to some sermons by Fulton Sheen on YouTube today it all seemed like prophecy. I wonder now if the Planned Parenthood Communist Marxist agenda that he warned about way back has been quietly infiltrating Church and schools all this time with its well-funded stealthy agenda of falsehood and indoctrination of the children to separate them from their parents' beliefs, and so bring about the end of Christian influence on society. This of course is a spiritual battle for the souls of Christians, and the times are now so openly scandalous in the Church and so anti-Christian in society and government processes that it is time the Church woke up to the grave danger we all are in. Let alone the danger from radical Islam that is already claiming martyrs. We as a Church are processing behind Christ to a kind of Calvary point, with traitors and cowards among us, and the scorn and hatred of the crowds increasing on every side, calling us names and punishing us and delighting when we fall. We are called to suffer and pray and hope in Jesus. It is time to decide where we place our allegiance and what we firmly believe. This is not a time for compromise and false peace. It is a time to choose Jesus even if it costs us everything.

A suburb parish where the population has changed from empty nesters to the next phase, whatever it is. The church building is an architectural masterpiece and a maintenance disaster. The church building consumes an excessive amount of Pastoral Council time and energy.

What I was taught by the nuns and Christian brothers about what it means to be a Catholic.

I was blessed by having as my parish priest for more than 20 years a man who was totally committed to the outcomes of Vatican II and to Social Justice including Aboriginal rights. Fr [-], he delegated wisely and formed a parish of active parishioners who took initiative and who were committed to social justice. I have been disappointed to find after his retirement and death that Fr [-] was a very rare example of parish priest and that few are willing or able to delegate to the laity as he did.

- Faith has been a little bit forced, only did things because we had to (Mass, Communion etc.)
- I was more religious when younger but the Church is less relevant to me now .
- I matured and realised that my values don't align with the Church's teaching in some areas.
- Faith doesn't feel like your own choice, you inherit it from parents or school, you are not given an opportunity to decide for self.
- Faith is guilt-based—going to church shouldn't be intrinsically linked to being a good person but that's the message I'm getting.
- Mercy Action volunteering is a really positive experience which actually enforces positive teachings of faith.
- Having a belief structure in a school can be important/useful.
- The views of the Church often don't agree with modern societal views and it's difficult for me to feel comfortable in that structure.
- Belonging to a Church has a bad image—it's uncool. People think you are super traditional and a prude if you go to church.
- It's not fun to go to church—it's boring, not engaging, and I can't relate to it.
- 21st century society is calling for 'new Church' however there seems to be a lack of ability to change. If the Catholic Church doesn't move into the 21st century, they will lose relevance.
- At Mass I feel no connection to God, (doesn't feel like we are carrying out the Christian mission.)
- School religious education is much different and better (Mercy Action, RE, SOR) than going to Mass—I feel like I belong at school.
- Priests don't listen they just preach—there needs to be more dialogue.
- I grew up Catholic but am no longer religious. I only attend Mass to be with family and because it's important to my parents.
- My best Church role models in life have been active women and men who don't allow the rigidity of Church doctrine to overshadow what's right, good and at the heart of the gospels (e.g. homosexuality, divorce, single parents, baptism).
- The Church's work in advocating for justice in marginalised communities has been the cornerstone of my Church experience. In following in Jesus' footsteps, founders of various charisms have ensured that the mission of Church is maintained through religious orders and the communities they have been part of. The service model of Church has been the strongest element of Church for me.

The stance that one is gay can be like the one religious stance of one's life. And once made many work too hard to preserve it and work all situations in accord with it. Though, such a stance is based on a true perception of part of the person. What I have tried is to listen to the person who is coming out as gay, so in being respected by a listener, the person may see there are great heights and other possibilities beyond their stance. Some have been encouraged to marry

heterosexually, some have travelled or advanced in their careers. One man even changed his discipline—from science to humanities and later worked as a social worker. Then, in a situation of relaxation about the whole of the world, one may find the stance to be gay is demystified. When someone, upon hearing I am involved in Courage, asks me "are you gay?!" I have found it a difficult question to answer. Then sometimes I tease them, but with truth, by saying "well 5% of my feelings are same sex attracted, while %95 of them can be gung ho heterosexually attracted. It makes them think past the categorizing of all people with labels, like gay and straight. Hopefully it introduces the hearer to an expectation that people are mysteries...they are a lot of things.

Last year I said yes to serving and all my experiences were so disappointing, disheartening and discouraging. The parish is not sorry and will never be sorry. I have learnt my lesson and that is you have to forgive those who aren't sorry and that people are the way they are because they don't want their reputation or the lime light taken away from them.

I think my recent experience of the Church has shaped me. I know God loves me and he is proud of me. I don't need anyone's approval, except his. I answer to God in the end not to anyone else. I am worthy and good enough. I am [-] and I will not be like anyone else. God created me just the way he wanted me to be. My parish priest, Father [-], will just have to [accept] me the way I am and if he doesn't well that just means he is not deserving of me and it his loss.

Adult children who won't go to Mass because of priests who are hypocrites.

We have experience times when parishes use the same volunteers over and over again and other possible gifted volunteers are never asked. We have also experienced time when we witnessed the priest greeting and attending to all people no matter their circumstances. This was edifying.

I have been listening to the same homilies for my entire life. When am I going to hear something of interest and relevance to modern life?

In some circumstances married priests are affirmed and work in ministry within a parish. This is a good step towards inclusiveness that could be extended.

I was bought up in the Anglican Church. We were always asked by our priest to question things. So as children we got to ask lots of questions. Now as a Catholic I don't think some priests like it when we ask questions. They try to answer with man-made assumptions not what God would approve or think that it would help the majority of the community make the world a better place.

I have been treated abominably by my parish priest, Fr [-]. I asked a question at a Parish Pastoral Council meeting, was told to 'Shut up!', and terminated from the council. This incident wasn't recorded in the minutes and the priest wouldn't allow it to be recorded. The question I asked was; "Why have 5 consecutive chairmen of the parish Finance Council been asked to resign?" I tried to get redress through the safeguarding people and the archbishop, but they did nothing. Fr [-] then continued my exclusion by not allowing me to sing, as I had done for decades, for the parish funerals. After a year putting up with this treatment, I've left my birth parish and moved to [-]. Priests can still do exactly what they wish and are held to no account. That question was never answered or followed up by anyone.

My parents were devout practicing Catholics, my father a convert. I received thirteen years of Catholic education. I married a good practising Catholic and we raised our seven children to the best of our ability in the faith. However, we felt unsupported by the Catholic school system as regards imparting the true, traditional teachings of the Catholic Faith.

I deeply appreciate great priests, religious and lay people who have inspired me in my life. Pope Francis speaks of our time not as an era of change but as a change of era. I pray that the Church's mission—beginning with my own—will truly be the mission of Jesus and a Sign of the Mystery of God's Presence amongst us. Please may we undo all we cling to which holds us back from this.

When my son died and wife was critically ill in hospital for many months I would go and pray in our local parish Church before a statue of Our Lady. One afternoon our priest, who had buried my son, was locking up and saw me and knelt beside me and prayed silently with me. He did not speak to me as he knew why I was there. After a few minutes he left quietly. I felt something of the weight of the love of the Church in all its history at that time.

Yes when I was young I went to Church every Sunday and it was dull and perhaps it isn't supposed to be exciting but it was dreary and the priest was a drunkard. I was not inspired by my faith at that time and for many years I was a non-practicing Catholic. I am also gay and haven't much time for many of the priests who tell us what to do on one hand whilst being gay themselves or abusive. I have since in the last 10 years or so changed my tune. I still think there is much to change in the Church but I need to do it from the inside. I can't stand outside and throw rocks. I love my current church I usually go by myself but what's nice is that it's full and it's vibrant and full of life. So bring on change, bring on cultural diversity but be all about love, not hate.

My experience is that the Catholic Church (which is the same for all hierarchical organisations) uses fear to keep people in line, despite the fact that the greatest commandment is to love others. I have come to terms with this by accepting that fear has no place in love. I pray the Church can boldly preach this fact.

The foundation of my faith was formed by the influence of two loving, religious but realistic parents and firmly strengthened by the education I received in both primary and secondary school by Brigidine nuns who, in the main, were devote and strong women capable of moving with the times albeit within the confines of their chosen order.

When my father returned from the war he was very ill and finances were poor. My parents chose to send me to the nearest school which was a state school. The local priest called and told Dad he was excommunicated because he did not send me to a RC school. I never knew I had been baptised a Catholic until I was in my teens. I found my way into the Church. This event scarred my father (who came back when I was confirmed) and taught me how important it is to LISTEN to each person, find out why, try to help not hinder. As each of us in the face of Christ for all we meet, I keep asking what sort of face am I.

ALL I want is to answer the call of the Holy Spirit in my life to Ordination in the Catholic priesthood so that I can serve the people in my area and beyond within the one true faith, to which I belong.

In the last five years, I have re-commenced daily Scripture reading and introduced daily contemplation. My relationship with God is much stronger.

I cannot recall a time when I did not go to Church. The communal celebration of the Mass is so uplifting.

After many years in active participation on Church and diocesan groups I feel not enough has been or is being done as to planning. Many years ago my parish priest introduced us to a programme called "Movement for a better world". After doing a lot of ground work to get this into action—the priest was transferred—the new priest 'binned' the idea—consequently the end of PLANNING ... This mainly was a plan to make the parish a community of communities—with the shortage of priests it was planned that with properly educated lay people every one in the parish could be reached and inducted and welcomed back into community. I was also active in parish council and later in Deanery and then into the archdiocesan Parish Council—all of which were about 'PLANNING' for a future which at the time were not being blessed with men looking to the priesthood as a vocation. Then along came the sad case of the sexual abuse by priests etc. etc. I feel we spent so much time and energy trying to deal with this that we have failed to "PLAN" for the Church—The world has changed so much in the last century, but I feel our Church is not coping due to a lack of planning for the changes. This is a massive task but let us pray for the courage to face this problem and by prayer and taking small steps we can make a difference.

Stories of my experiences of faith in relation to the Catholic Church. My first experience came through working as a State school teacher at the [Catholic] Children's Hospital school where I was impressed by the joy and love of the Sisters of Mercy who worked there. I attended workshops given by a former Catholic priest at the invitation of an Anglican friend. I have been to many of his workshops and found his personal walk with the Lord and his shared insights very helpful and personally refreshing and encouraging. I have attended Mercy Fellowships at a local parish with a friend who converted.

Previously delved into this in another comment, but from about years 13–17 my faith was non-existent even though I had attended a Catholic primary school. Luckily I had taken an interest in my heritage which happens to be Croatian, and I had only accompanied myself with Eastern Europeans (mostly Orthodox Christians) They had all be raised to be staunch Christians and left me feeling a little disappointed in my lack of Identity spiritually. I could not see the difference between my faith and the faith of a protestant. To keep up with my friends' piety I took it upon myself to research the roots of the Catholic faith, and because of the conservative values I already had politically I was already wandering closer to a traditional aspect of Catholicism. The rebirth (if you will) I had from that experience onward is nothing short of a miracle. Experiencing a Latin Mass (which I am very lucky to be able to do considering its rarity) compared to the Novus Ordo which I had grown up with, changed myself immediately. I felt as if my faith meant something again. I finally finished reading the Bible, I familiarized myself with the philosophy of Saint Thomas of Aquinas, entrenching my faith even deeper.

I am a single lay person in the Church and feel very isolated and marginalised. Why doesn't the Church ever have anything useful or helpful to say about us?

When I was younger in the Philippines, I did not study much about what the Church teaches, and when we moved here in Australia, I discovered more news of all different abuses around the world, and this made me nearly broke out from the Church, and would have committed apostasy,

blasphemy, and heresy, if not for me keeping strong in the faith, through my mother who constantly prays every day, then, here in Australia, with more resources available, I have started delving deeper in the Scriptures, as well as learning and reading through the Church History and the writings of the Early Church Fathers, as well as the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (note: The Summa), and suffice to say, my Catholic faith is stronger than ever.

The arrogance of the Church hierarchy, at least in our area, to even show good manners is shown by our archbishop's failure to respond to emails, a letter and even a phone call to his secretary about his lack of response. Our group includes eleven younger married adults who all still attend Mass and the sacraments regularly and whose seventeen children do the same in spite of OR perhaps because of not attending Catholic schools. On the rare occasion when we are fortunate enough to attend a service which includes traditional practises such as the use of Sanctus bells, without an exception young people immediately sit up and take notice, likewise incense, sacred works of art, sprinkling of holy water, etc. etc. all contribute to an awakening of a sense of awe within all of us but especially in the younger people.

Week after week, year after year, I'm fed on the same Scripture texts and listen to homilies that the priest dutifully delivers on the same texts, trying to make them relevant to the pious few who bother to attend Mass. These homilies, for the most part, do not challenge the faithful in the manner that Pope Francis does in his [homilies] and his public statements. For the most part we are left to satisfy our own spiritual needs. We are not challenged to see the big picture. If the Popes are challenging the young people to take up the gauntlet and be prophets of the Word, it is not heard in the pews. There are many young people who ready and generous to give their time but they are not attracted by the rather saccharine, dull offerings dished out at Mass. Actually, the same could hold for the older folk. Could the Australian bishops find the courage to take the bull by the horns, and adapt a 2,000-yr-old liturgy that served the purpose so well then, and base more on the culture of our day? Or is enculturation only for primitive people? If the letters of St Paul, for example, are suitable for reading at Mass. Why not those of the Pope and our bishops? It wouldn't take too much to accomplish. The Church has to evolve just as the world does.

I am a church-going Catholic woman and a teacher at a Catholic secondary school. I love the Church which has been so much a part of my life. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to justify to intelligent students why the Church community of which they are a part continues to limit the role of women in the Church.

The example of the many large, happy and Catholic families I have come across has convinced me of the deep joy to be gained from the generosity of those many self-forgetful, constantly giving parents. May there be a growth in such Australian families! I think of a beautiful young friend who is having her third child soon with her two other children under 2years of age.

[-] Catholic Education is responsible for my faith journey—the relevant, enthusiastic APREs and teachers. Please find ways to better support them. Ask THEM what they need.

My daughter was born in 1993 when we were living in a small community in [-] where we had no resident priest, there was no visitor accommodation and was very expensive to get to. She was born in [-], and I asked my parent's priest (the parish of [-] that I grew up in and still went to Mass at when I was in [-]) to baptize her. He refused because I was not now a member of the

parish, even after I explained my circumstances. I then asked the parish priest at [-] (where I went to primary school). He refused for the same reason. Then it was the Franciscans of my sister's parish who also refused. They all said that the Archbishop had recently issued a notice asking that all Baptisms be done in the child's own parish. Finally I petitioned the Cathedral who said that she could be Baptized at [a parish] ([-]). It was a very hot day, but the priest wouldn't let me give her a quick drink after Mass before the Baptism as he told me "I'm already late for breakfast at the Archbishop's Residence". It was rushed and, as she was screaming all the way through, not a sacred experience for anyone. (She didn't even get a Baptismal Candle which wasn't noticed until sometime later.) Fast forward to Dec 2014 when she was getting married. Although they were not getting married in the Church, and she was marrying a non-Catholic, they both agreed (and wanted) a blessing by a priest prior to the wedding. I asked a retired priest who I was working voluntarily for to come to the house where I would have a little altar. He refused on the grounds that it may be seen as condoning a wedding that was not going to be in a church. I then asked the priest at my church ([-]). He refused too even though I pointed out to him that Jesus blessed everyone, even sinners. The PP (at [-]) also refused. The couple were baffled and disappointed (as was I). I was also very hurt. I get extremely sad when I think of how the Church and some priests have really lost the message of Jesus. In Feb 2016, my son-in-law died. The service was in the Catholic chapel at [-], [-] in [-] conducted by a Catholic Chaplain. It was beautiful. I am so grateful that he, at least, didn't refuse this service even though he knew that the young man wasn't a Catholic or even a church-goer. Surely all Catholics, but especially priests, should be compassionate, loving, kind and humble. I sincerely hope and pray that my prayer support and financial support of our Seminary is helping to educate the students there in these virtues. This experience really does make me wonder if a priest's blessing and prayers before his wedding would have helped my son-in-law during his difficult life experiences.

As a convert some 30 years ago I was in a large group doing our RCIA. The people I prayed and discussed my spirituality with were very pious and devout and I loved them all. But after my conversion when I socialised with them I realised that like me they were flawed and "normal" this set me back a bit. However with prayer and deep thought I came with the help of the Spirit to know this was Gods way, we could be normal but we could also be pious this is the nature of humanity a mystery but also a truth. So by understanding this and accepting the flawed nature of being us I began to develop a real faith for the real world. No longer seeking perfection but trying to live my life with Love, FAITH AND HOPE. By being truthful to myself and trying to see the truth in all things of my life and accepting the flaws and trying to improve in my understanding I am becoming a better person a little bit each day. This is thanks to the experience of a faith journey with those people whose beliefs were strong but day-to-day life was as fraught with temptation and human weakness as myself.

Questions raised in Section 2 are formed from actual experience and are a profound examination of one's Faith.

We have been active members of our parish community for over forty years. We lived through the first twenty plus years with elderly resident priests who did everything that needed to be done in regard to the Church and liturgy. The retirement of the last of these priests brought a renaissance to the community via a younger priest who was given the job of preparing the community for

change. It became apparent that our days of having a resident priest were numbered. By encouraging parishioners in liturgical formation and establishing a welcoming community, our new priest was able to set the community on its feet for further changes. When he moved on, the people were ready to accept the responsibility of organising their own community, with the priest turning up to preside over liturgical celebrations. The employment of a pastoral associate was also a forward step in relieving the priest of some of the pastoral duties and having a lay person on the ground to assist community members in planning celebrations such as Easter and Christmas. The community has coped with joining first with one neighbouring parish, then another one, and finally the combination of 6 former parishes into one new parish. The one concern is that those who began that transition more than 20 years ago are now in advancing years and have had difficulty convincing younger community members to assume some of the responsibilities that go with being community leaders. Our priests are overworked with admin and compliance issues, leaving less time for the pastoral needs of the people. Time for the employment of another pastoral associate!!!

I value small Christian communities: small groups to pray together and to reflect on scripture and to try to make sense of what God may be asking today. Praying with other Christians is also informative. Exposure to a range of Catholic spiritualities is a blessing available to a few.

As someone coming from a Protestant background, I value the liturgy, the sense of the holiness and presence of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration and the emphasis given to both the preaching of the Word (homily) and the encounter with the Word in the sacrament.

My most recent personal experience of Church is a positive one. My lesbian partner and I have been in a relationship for more than ten years. Within our parish a significant number of people have friended and support us on our journey, others are unaware of our circumstances, others ignore the issue. Ten months ago we married at a civil ceremony. We have been welcomed by our parish priest and the parish team and are included in serving within the liturgy and pastorally. I was deeply saddened that our marriage could not be sacramentalised. We have each previously encountered discrimination and homophobia but our strong faith and need to be nurtured by the Church we grew up in, has emboldened us to have courage.

Encountering mature spiritual people within the Church, lay and ordained, who strive to follow Christ and help others in their need. Our Church should be a vital part of our society not a withering branch as it has become.

I remember being told from the pulpit when I was growing up that nothing good could come from a mixed marriage. As a product of a mixed marriage this made me feel very hurt and confused. It is extraordinary how much damage can be caused by this judgemental attitude. Another story was from a woman who was abused as a teenager. When she went to confession she was told that she would need to spend a life of penance for tempting a priest.

As my precious little daughter lay dying in intensive care I received an interstate phone call from a former parish priest. The words he spoke helped me through and help me still. A priest chaplain whom I had never met before, sat by the bed with me in intensive care on and off for several days. We didn't speak, he just sat there, but I was comforted by his presence and felt his prayer. Having to part with my daughter drew me closer to Jesus rather than turning me away. My faith

has been strengthened by the witness and care of wonderful priests. I am so grateful to be a member of Christ's Body and to my parish priests through the years. I am so grateful to my parents and ancestors who carried their love of Jesus down through the generations to me. I am so grateful to have precious friends who walk with me on this faith journey.

For 60 years I have readily believed in God, as creator etc. I have reflected for years on the Nicene creed as a summary of the Christian faith but ALWAYS troubled by the way Jesus is 'introduced' and having coexisted with the Father before time began when in fact Jesus the man DID NOT exist until 2000 years ago. Only recently have I realized this problem of understanding the creed is purely related to the manner in which it is expressed.

I currently teach a Catechism class after school hours to teenage girls who are in a Public High School. They are thirsty for the Truth and so enthusiastic to learn about the sacraments as if it was the first time they ever heard of it. They enjoy having quiet times of prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament, they have discovered the value of Confession (using a Confessional with a screen), and are willing to give witness as a Christian in their schools even if that means being "unpopular" in matters of Sexuality and morals. I am inspired by because I have no need to hide the demands of Christianity, but they see the positive value in it and the Love of God.

In the past I was a child of a single parent and went to a school run by nuns. Daily I was subjected to inappropriate comments about my family situation and thus I felt I sinned or wasn't a good girl from an early age. It has taken a long time to deal with this.

Plenary Council 2020, Year 11, [-] College, 3:16 Catholic Studies Class, Think-pair-share on "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" Student responses below: The way that we celebrate Mass has not changed and is not appealing to young people today. The way priests have such a different lifestyle is not appealing to attract new priests. There should be more outreach/charity work to attract more people of different ages and demographics. Provide more help with people with disabilities. Priests should be able to marry and have families. Youth should be more educated about priesthood and the role. Priests should be more involved in the community rather than just in and around their parish. Making Mass more accessible and in different ways (online maybe) to cater families that cannot attend regular celebrations. Make Mass more relatable to the youth of Australia. Try and engage more youth with different ideas. Change the curriculum to be make religion more practical and Christian related, less content.

In March 1979, with the assistance of Holy Spirit Sister, [-], I started [-] [group] in [-]. The reason behind this was that the Church at that time did not accepted divorced persons and, in many cases, they were asked to leave their parish and move to another one because they were a blight on that community. I saw this as unjust, particularly by the person left behind who wanted to and needed to practice her/his faith and to receive the sacraments. Through the Holy Spirit and the presence of this sister, people felt comfortable to return to Mass and to restore their peace of mind. We ministered to hundreds (120 came to the first meeting alone) and their children. I believe this was the work of the Holy Spirit and we were supported by the wonderful bishop [-] and Archbishop [-], both now deceased. Priests did not fully accept us for a long time but the hierarchy in this case did. We were in touch with the pain of the peoples. [-] was the child of a

woman who was only 37 when she was widowed and left with five children to rear so she could share that insight with the parents and the children.

I have been blessed with the experience of growing up in a Catholic family, Catholic schools, formed in a Catholic Teachers college, etc. etc. I had the wonderful freeing experience of Vatican II, we were a priestly People!! The Church was on the move but sadly it became stuck! Fear cripples the Spirit. Just one example, We had a wonderful opportunity with the third rite of reconciliation, people embraced it! No suddenly it was deemed too successful, maybe the Laity needed more penance and soon we were told it was no longer an option. Study of the history of this sacrament gives good evidence of how it was developed and became a clerical stronghold. And so people stopped going and so it continues but it seems the Church hierarchy do not listen, cannot read the signs of the times or perhaps the movement of the Spirit. The Spirit is perhaps moving us beyond needing only priests, brothers and nuns to be the workers! Rather than lament what is called a "lack of vocations" we could see this as an invitation of the Spirit!

All of us are immigrants living in Australia for some years, some of us several years, others just a few. Some of us are citizen and others trying to be but the common thing between us is our faith. Many of us found Christ in this land, far of ours. And live our faith in our own culture is helping us to keep the love of Jesus in our heart. Every day is coming a new immigrant needing to find a strong community what understand them and give them support.

Part of my life was lived in the Australian bush where it was not possible to attend Sunday Mass with regularity—the one priest covered a large territory—but I shall never forget the care which my father took to read quietly the prayers of the Mass and other prayers for a long while every Sunday morning. We never left the house before his blessing us with Holy Water, he never retired at night without saying 'God Bless You'. These practices might seem old-fashioned in our fast modern society but they have been the fabric which has strengthened my recognition of the importance of the practice of our Faith, of prayer, as the only path to lead us to God and earthly as well as eternal happiness.

Growing up pre Vatican II in a practicing Catholic family and educated by selfless, devoted nuns I can only express deep gratitude to parents, priests and nuns for teaching us unadulterated Catholic Teaching. Truth. Today my experience is that Pope Francis calls those of us who have remained in the Church through thick and thin and yet who still hold fast to the teachings and Traditions of the Church "rigid" plus a few other similar compliments! I hear his comments and try to ignore but sometimes I think an apology would be very much in keeping with his mode of operation—being pastoral. In the fifty years since Vatican II, practicing Catholics of my age group have witnessed the devaluing of many Catholic devotions, a removal of the Blessed sacrament (to a side veranda so to speak) crucifixes removed, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass altered drastically etc. etc.—yet we are still there in spite of what our Shepherds have done and that is because of the teaching, witness and white martyrdom of faithful nuns and priests pre Vatican II. Today, especially in Rome, it appears to be career path and not a vocation. I continue to be extremely grateful to all the faithful priests of today as I worship and thank our God for his Redeeming us through his death and resurrection in the Novus Ordo Mass of this time.

I am a lifelong Catholic employed in Catholic education and loving every minute. Unfortunately, the clerical Church has, for the most part, lost touch with Catholics in the mainstream. Obstacles and not incentives are placed in the paths of good Catholic men and women who seek to bring about God's kingdom through faith in action.

Thirty years ago in our parish the priest asked us, a group of about twenty people, "If we could have married priests who would you put forward in our parish?". Within minutes we all agreed that (name) is our obvious choice! We have been ready for it for years. Our leadership is afraid!

I would like to share a story of how one person of faith can really make a difference in this world. My journey of faith to now identify as a 'fully participating Catholic' as a young adult, started way back when I was only 8 years old and we had a volunteer from my local parish come into my State school to teach us in Special Religious Education (SRE). My brothers and I had all been baptised Catholic, and hence we were put in this class, but we did not ever go to Mass (not even for Easter or Christmas). But, because this lady had given up her time to be a volunteer and lead our class in SRE, she happened to change my life forever. One day, when it was that time in the parish, she handed out forms to us about going into the sacramental program in our parish for the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. I remember my parents sitting down at the dinner table looking through these forms my brothers and I had brought home, and I remember hearing that my mother would not be an Easter and Christmas-only Catholic (as that was in great opposition to her values to do things well and do things right, always) but if they decided to get us kids to go through our sacraments, then we would be doing as the form said and become a family that went to Sunday Mass every week. There was no space for semi-attendance... we would either be all in, or all out. And, thanks be to God, that was the day that they decided that we as a family would be all in, and the family became a unit that went to Mass every Sunday morning. Without my SRE teacher, who was simply a volunteer (and I can't even remember her name now!), I would not be where I am today, and I can't imagine what other path I could have taken to become a practising Catholic. This one volunteer's presence in my life has been a catalyst that launched me onto a journey of walking, challenging, and growing with the Catholic faith in my own life. So I am so grateful for all the 'little works' and 'little decisions' volunteers and families make to help connect children with God and the Catholic Tradition.

Each Sunday I attend Mass and each Sunday I cannot believe that the priests continue to preach in the most mundane manner. My stimulation around my faith has come from lay people who have studied theology and share their insights.

Through being involved in the Church (lay led liturgies, RCIA, Lenten program) I have found a family. Mass means so much more having become involved in parish life. Whereas I once went to church because that's what my parents did, I now go because I understand better what it's about and why things are done.

After going to [-] Church [-] for more than 30 years I have since stopped doing so and now join with [-] congregation. The high stress on ritual, intolerance and lack of friendliness demonstrated by the [religious order in charge of the former parish] has put me off.

I have only recently returned to the Catholic Church on my own accord within the last 8 months. I was baptised Catholic, received the sacraments of confirmation and communion, was educated in

a Catholic primary school and then went on to graduate high school at a local Lutheran college. I had always known from a very young age that I was a truly spiritual person and it has only been now in my early twenties that I have finally returned to the Church, and am glad that I have after many years. It was with the help of an online Bible community, although an American ministry, that helped point me back to the direction of the Lord and His Word. I have become increasingly aware that a life without the Lord and His Word etched on my heart, mind and soul, and a life that lives out this faith is simply a life that is unappealing, unfulfilling and unsatisfying. It is thanks to, by chance, of coming across an online ministry for women, that the Lord called me back to Him, His Word, and ultimately planted the desire and need to return to my Catholic faith and its Church.

I think it all begins in the home and not a case of leaving faith to the priest and the schools.

I have been a practising Catholic all my life and very involved in parish life, serving on committees and being an organist for over 35 years. I married at 20 and had 3 children with my husband. He had an affair and eventually left me for another woman, despite my attempts at counselling. The parish priest tried in vain to assist. For a long time I felt incomplete because ultimately, the marriage ended in divorce and I felt as though I could not fully engage in the faith because of this stigma. Thirteen years later I met another man who was a practising Catholic and never married. At this stage, I decided to pursue an annulment and it was successfully obtained so that I could marry in the Church again. This was something that was very important to both of us. The clergy at the time was very supportive and helped in many ways. However, this process took a long time, even when my ex-husband did not respond to any requests for information. I feel that in my case, the annulment could have happened a bit quicker instead of almost the year of my life which had already passed.

The faith instruction and the frequency of receiving the sacraments and attending Mass during my youth shaped my faith to this day, although I loathed attending Mass eight times a week I believe it left a lasting influence, although I must say a lot of my fellow youth don't seem to be shaped in this way.

I am happy to testify that how my faith has saved and uplifted me in Australia. I am a migrant to Australia on work visa and had undergone severe difficulties to stay in Australia. I was about to lose my job and not able to manage the expenses of my family. So, my family was sent back to my native. I involved myself in prayerful life with invested faith that only God can make changes and wanting for miracle. I visited [-] at [-] every month and participated in holy proceedings. Things started to happen. My job was secured and the work has sponsored for permanent resident visa. More faith and spiritual life has led me to citizen of Australia today. I encourage other to be faithful and keep praying until you receive the blessings that you deserve.

My family life shaped my faith life from baptism. And through all the ups and downs in life, I can look back and see that God at work there. I might even say I saw miracles happen. Not like a bolt of light from heaven, but in the every day-to-day life. On more than one occasion, a house was found for my family, across the street from the Church and school, when I was unwell, and needed to be close to a Catholic School. I must give much praise and admiration to the wonderful nuns of my youth [1950's] who not only moulded me into a good Christian person, a well-

educated one, but most importantly, they were my mentors and friends, who have influenced my life in every way. I also respect the wonderful priests of my life. Within my family there are priests, so I know how hard a life they also had to contend with over the years. But I believe that the future of the Church requires a new type of priest, Deacon, etc. and that means more inclusiveness of women in leadership roles, and perhaps married priests.

I love my Catholic faith, and live it every day. Without the Eucharist in Mass and listening to the homily, I would find life more difficult. Our western world leads many people on the wrong paths in life, and if they have no guidance from our Church leaders, we will see empty pews in our Churches. Especially under 55's. Our Catholic schools must prepare our students to be more active in the practice of their faith, and to resist the temptations that await them in the wider world. Our young people want the Church to be more inclusive of both men and women. And to realize, also, that they, the youth, have had little exposure to what the Church offers as in previous generations. Change must come.

I was away from the Church for 17 years and when I wanted to come back, I had a negative response from the first priest who I went to confession to about my prolonged absence. It took me a while to process that until I eventually repeated this issue to another priest who was more forgiving. I do think that the Church is far too hung up on dogma. I believe that our conscience always needs to be considered. Cardinal Pell in not agreeing with the exercise of our personal conscience from a dogmatic perspective has lost the sensus fidelium.

It is a shame people have to suffer financially or career related to their sexual identity or past mistakes.

I am Catholic, I have been part of a parish, attended a Catholic school and now teach in a Catholic school. As an adult I think the direction of the Church needs to 'shift' into the world of the 21st century. I am a new mum and have had serious thoughts about Baptism and if I want my daughter to become part of the Church?

I see God every day in my work as a teacher. It is a God that shines its face in moments of joy, in a smile, in a hello passing by; all the things that build a community where we are supported and can support one another.

I have grown up in a Catholic household, attended Catholic schools and experienced a 'reconversion' or sorts in my adult life whereby I made a decision to live my life for God. I am for the Church and its teachings, and I pray for a community where our youth have a greater understanding of truth and righteousness.

I grew up in the Catholic Church system, and I basically learnt that I can't do anything wrong or I'll be punished. I learnt that the teachings of Jesus aren't really at the core of what we were taught; in fact, Jesus was really just a figure for a statue on the altar. As an adult, and finding my own religious path, I have realised that it is the small things I do every day for the children I teach that makes the real difference in the world. Love one another, forgive each other, learn from your mistakes, and spend every day appreciating the differences in each and every one of us.

<p>Yes! A sister of the Church once told me that my Dad will not go to heaven if he wasn't baptised... I was 8 years old and it upset me. Still does.</p>
<p>Having clerical teachers who were so supportive and encouraging.</p>
<p>I have had great priests who are open and liberal and interested in people, not just tradition. I recently heard Fr Brennan speak and his open dialogue is what I would like from the pulpit every week.</p>
<p>I spent time on an Indigenous community and grew up in a small country town. Church is part of my life and our children's life. Our five sons are not regular attenders at their local Church and we wonder and question how we can make it more engaging and relevant.</p>
<p>As a teacher of Religious Education, I have found it difficult to address to young female members why they are not considered equal by the Church in which they are dedicated.</p>
<p>I see the Church as to standards—what the priest preaches on Sunday does not always practice in real life. The priest has to stop being the dictator of the parish and wanting to leave themselves as the legacy. More compassion not ownership.</p>
<p>My experience of Church in Australia has been a journey of many years of questioning and searching as a practising Catholic. I was born into a Catholic family with an Australian Catholic mother and a Lebanese Catholic father. As my dad was brought up in the Melkite Rite there were considerable variations of traditions for as long as I can remember. I married an Australian Catholic and we raised three children in the Catholic faith through many changes in our Church. We moved around Australia with my husband's work and were a part of many parishes and Catholic schools with a variety of differing priorities. I helped run sacramental programs and youth groups and participated in many other groups in these parishes and believed I was doing this for my God, my children and the wider parish community. My children left home and gradually drifted away from the practice of their Catholic faith but I still held on to the hope that something would draw them back. I never saw myself doubting my own commitment until a few years ago when I experienced a dark period in my life where I needed to take some time out to process and reflect on my life. I pulled back from a lot of parish commitments but could not really explain my reasons because they involved others. At that time I felt like I was letting people down because of the busyness of parish life and rosters. I am now very aware of the variety of stories of others in our Church and keep a close check on my expectations of others. I would like to see more opportunities for smaller groups in the wider parish to be Church to each other. Our parishes are getting larger as they combine and it makes it difficult to really get to know other parishioners if one does not have the time to volunteer regularly.</p>
<p>I have only met one priest who I could see was on fire for the Lord and I was so blessed to have him baptise two of my children. It gave me hope that there are clergy who really connect with us and know us.</p>
<p>I grew up going to a Lutheran school and always went to Church regularly. When I moved to America in 2010 I would sing in some of the most amazing cathedrals as a music major and when I returned home I started going to the [-] ([a] Christian church in [-]). It was just an amazing sense of community and life. For some reason after moving to [-] and getting into full time work I just</p>

never seemed to attend church anymore. I started working in an independent alternative learning centre that had no emphasis on religion. The youth had lost their way, did not believe and to be honest were offended that my background had a faith. What they were saying and why then stopped believing did have some merit, what has happened in a lot of Catholic churches with certain priests, not understanding the words they were delivering, and not feeling apart of the community anymore when they attended. I now work at a Catholic school and still tend to see a few students with similar opinions. There is a disconnect between the Youth and the Church and whilst I still believe it is tough.

The Augustinians' philosophy of caring for each other is inspiring.

An important factor that truly shaped and changed my spiritual life was being asked to go to work in china as a teacher/missionary. I did not feel as though I had the qualifications or the temperament yet it was an experience from the outset a life-changing one. From the formation to the journey in China to the debriefing and beyond, my life is a reflection of my faith. My family and friends will attest to my spiritual growth throughout the years; it is a gift that I truly treasure. Before leaving for China, my faith was not tested nor refined, yet now because of the experience, my faith took on another dimension—it permeated my very being. Even today, my decisions are based on faith, the Word of God and the Eucharist. Nothing is done without God permeating my life. My China experience was back in 1990, yet it remains an indelible mark upon my soul. Even one of my students where I taught, moved to Australia and became a Catholic. She is an inspiration to others. And all this because I was asked, "Would you consider teaching in China?"

The Aboriginal Catholic Communities believe in Shared Leadership, Shared decision making. We could learn much from their culture and way of life.

Credible examples set by my parents and family. Authentic faith witnesses in my formative years. education primary, secondary and tertiary ...

SUBMISSION TO THE PLENARY COUNCIL—Theology and life First a brief position statement about God and man. God is a construct emerging from the interaction in the human brain between the basic “mammalian” brain (limbic brain that is common to all mammals) and the neocortex or intellectual brain, which latter poses both support and challenge to the inclinations of the limbic brain. We of the human species fall within the mammalian world. All mammals suckle their young and provide nurture, shelter, protection and “education” to prepare them to live independently. Some other mammals have a neo-cortical brain, but its greater development in humans sets us apart in many ways. Combined with our hand with its opposable thumb, that imparts extensive and complex manual skill, the neo-cortical brain has enabled humans to construct security from the physical hazards of the environment and to produce and store food supplies, as well as protection from hostile predators. The neo-cortex, through the accumulation of knowledge, control of oral and symbolic communication, and the capacity to imagine and plan, imparts the capacity to accumulate power, wealth and control over others by those who strive to do that. Jesus on the other hand, conveyed the message that it is the poor, not the powerful, who are blessed, and that the basic commandment to guide our approach to the world is to love. He started with love of God, seeming to imply an external God—having been nurtured himself in the beliefs of the Jewish faith, but also the imperative to love one another. This was very basic advice,

in the latter case, to live out our mammalian destiny. Our Catholic faith embraces this core message, but surrounds it with a cocoon of dogma, and a sharp boundary between holiness and sinfulness—welcome and rejection. The youth of the free world, even those nurtured in the teaching and experience of the faith as exemplified in Australia by our magnificent network of Catholic schools, cannot find resonance with the traditional prayers (e.g. the Nicene Creed) and practices of our parishes. Mostly they have drifted away to alternative belief systems that enable a more meaningful connection with the modern world, while some struggle back and forth looking for signs that our faith might move better to fit the world they live in. Pope Francis has made moves towards change, especially in relation to inequality and to retaining the Church's embrace of those whose personal relationships fail. Tragically conservative voices from some Church leaders are striving to discredit Pope Francis and to protect a great deal of redundant doctrine. May we all recognise the crisis that has overtaken our version of Christianity and strive through discernment to discover ways to connect the teachings of Jesus more vitally to the culture and challenge of the world we live. [-] (12/02/2019)

I migrated to Australia about 15 years ago—I was initially shocked when I attended my first Sunday Mass. I felt that there was very little reverence for the Blessed sacrament. It appears to me that most people were more interested in each other than praying. I found it very hard to pray in Church with all the noise from people talking to each other before and after Mass. And I also noticed that the tabernacle was always placed away from the Altar—I'm not sure as to why this was so—but it made me sad. When I go to church I go to adore, worship and speak to my GOD who is present in the Tabernacle—I feel that he should be in the Centre or Head of the Church. The people I met at church were very accommodating and kind. However I also noted the absence of young people in most Masses. It appears that all Masses were for the old people and the very young. I sent my children to Catholic schools, thinking that they would continue with Catholic Catechisms but I was not really satisfied with what I saw they were learning—I felt that it was very broad—consisting of Religion as a whole—its evolution history and progress to date. To date, I can conclude that most young people have little knowledge of Catholic Catechism.

I am a cradle Catholic who left the Church for ten years and came back in my late 20s. I have a sister who is a missionary nun struggling to make ends meet in PNG. My family have sent money to her for the past 40 years to help support their order. I have visited her as well and taken her on holidays. They work hard with very little. So I know what missionary means, I have also been involved with Care and Concern in our parish for at least 25 years and have also joined Rosies the last few years. As well as cleaning the church and being a minister of communion I was housekeeper for our priests for 20 years... My husband and I also brought up our own family and put the kids through Catholic Schools. My husband who passed away four years ago was not a Catholic. I remember an older family friend coming to visit me many years ago and talking about how much faith his mother had and how he did too. Because he was someone outside my family that I respected and knew was intelligent I decided maybe I was missing that spirituality by being stubborn and only believing what I could see. Both my parents had faith and my father, whom I adored (as my mother had died when was 10) belonged to SVDP and the Knights of Stn Cross along with various other volunteer jobs in the Church. But maybe it was too close—I always felt growing up we went to every cat and dog fight at the church. So now when I say a lot of priests

are afraid of women and don't know how to deal with them I know what I am saying. They came direct from boys' schools into the seminaries and into parishes. Even now we get visiting priests seemingly thrown to the wolves of parish life with not enough life skills to cope with everyone's various points of view. The seminaries need to be open to celibate men and women, married people and to all those called to be priests. Maybe our expectation of priests needs to change... They are only people. Society gathers on the steps of the post office and in parks as a sign of spirituality but they aren't coming to church. They aren't finding our God there. Something needs to change.

I feel that the Church in Australia has let me down. It has silenced some very progressive theologians and demonised them. As a result they have been forced to leave their ministries. I don't feel as excited and energised about my faith as I did in my early adult years. Most homilies that I hear these days are pious platitudes that are devoid of a challenge to the status quo. When will I hear from the ambo a direct challenge to those in the congregation who support unjust government policies.

Being involved in MenAlive and learning about Scripture has opened my life to God greatly. Reading the Bible daily has changed my life and my family life.

For some time, I was not practicing my faith. As a result of this, I experienced a loss of peace and satisfaction in life. One of the most important things which prompted me to think about coming back to the faith was my memory of the peace I would experience after receiving the Eucharist at Mass as a child. Through my research, I confirmed my childhood believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and rediscovered a strong sense of peace through the sacrament of Reconciliation, participation at Mass and adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass. Reconciliation, Mass and Adoration have been pivotal in any spiritual progress that I have experienced since returning to the Catholic faith.

I understand, and acknowledge, the urgency in responding to the catastrophic (and widening) problem of sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. I am increasingly concerned that with so many good people focussed on "triage," there are serious issues—such as the professionalism of our Catholic institutions, executives, boards and trustees—is being neglected. The risk here is that we may be planting the seed for the next crisis in the Church by delaying best practice and culture change in our organisations.

I am the mother of a 19-year-old son who is a beautiful being and just happens to be transgender. I truly believe that God created him the way he was meant to be and I have had the pleasure of watching him mature and grow into a beautiful Christian boy. I have had the pleasure of our family being accepted in our Catholic community however I know that this is very much up to the priest in our church. A different priest can mean a very different outcome and I worry for him in our Church in the future. I believe in Marriage Equality for all LGBT Christians and I cannot see Jesus excluding these beautiful souls who were created in this way. I would like to see more women in roles of authority within the Church. A woman called to the priesthood by God should be able to serve out her calling. We are missing out on a huge wealth of talent by excluding them. I hope that our Church can move forward with positivity, inclusion and love and leave behind the judgement and small mindedness of our past. Many of those in my age group who came from

faithful Catholic families have now left the Church or turn up only at weddings and funerals. It will I believe take a major shift in our Church with a move back to basics in order to bring them back. There is a lot of lost faith in the Church itself that has caused so many to move away.

I would prefer not to finish on a negative note. I do feel our Pope is speaking to each of us each time he speaks, but there is a disconnect in how this Australian Church relays his messages. Added to this when more than 60% of the sexual abuse of children committed by the paedophiles protected by the Catholic Church in Australia were individuals within the Church and with 90% of those being men. The most staggering part of this is the insurmountable damage and misery they have caused to these children, now adults that they abused. NOW, the Church appears to be still not owning this their problem, instead reflecting it back onto the community. I was baptised a Catholic after birth, raised a Catholic child, attended only Catholic schools and colleges and lived a Catholic life. Have baptised, raised and educated my own children as Catholic. They are also attending only Catholic schools and colleges. Now I feel a foreigner in my Church and that I do not belong in that building. I have thought of looking for a different Church.

I was blessed to be born into stability. Not wealth but stability. I was blessed to be born into true Catholicism. My parish priest was a humble, joyful priest, Fr [-]. His Novus Ordo Mass was said with such reverence of the sacred Mysteries. In my adulthood, I have read the works of the Church Fathers and Doctors. I have read the great encyclicals. I have been taught by good Shepherd priests. I have been taught in Adoration by the High priest.

My most influential experiences were during my youth when I was helped to encounter a God who seemed naturally warm, close and compassionate, in spite of my fears and doubts. I encountered this God through the witness of those who seemed to genuinely love and delight in God. This is partly why I have emphasised the powerful value and lasting effect of witness, more than intellectual input, which of course has its necessary place. I am not suggesting that a purely emotional experience is enough, because intelligent understanding has also helped me greatly. But if there is no engagement of the emotions, of the heart, then I do not think we will draw people to God and sustain their attachment to Him, especially when there are so many other forces in our society competing for their hearts.

Actually the Catholic Church let me and my child down when I disclosed about domestic violence. I ended up receiving a lot of practical support instead from the Baptist community, but I reached out to them.

As a very small child I lived with my parents and siblings on a dairy farm on the [-]. My father would get up before dawn, despite many freezing or damp mornings to milk the herd by hand. Then he would return to the house to dress and help my mother in our dressing, so we could all attend the nine o'clock Mass at a nearby village. Both parents would be fasting. The after Mass morning tea with lashings of fresh corn meat sandwiches and billy tea eaten under a big shady gum tree where local news was shared, were all shards of my Faith Prism that was to grow and develop within my soul. I never heard anyone there complain of the harshness of their early morning routines. I am often so glad none of these parental figures lived to see the mess their beloved Church is in today.

The best experience of Church I have had is within a ministry called SPRED. This is a ministry which involves small groups that meet once a week to offer friendship and catechesis for adults with intellectual disabilities. Possible even more significantly, it is a ministry which forms basic Christian communities (not called that, but it's how it operates). Every 2nd week, the group of adults without an intellectual disability prepares for their session by meeting to reflect, pray, share life experience and share a supper. This calls ordinary people from the pews into close, prayerful, supportive relationship with each other. This relationship flows from Jesus and focuses on service to others. There is no heavy-handed scrutiny of complex dogma or morals or liturgical rubrics. Nothing has strengthened my faith more than this experience. It is authentic and unpretentious. It doesn't exclude anyone. It is structured enough to work smoothly and easily (and there are leaders, agreed on by the group according to their particular gifts) but free enough to respond to different needs and to the prompting of the Spirit. It is Christ-centred and it gives people a way to celebrate Christ in each other and in the sacraments. It doesn't need people to be really 'Churchy' or highly educated in dogma or moral teachings or liturgical norms (even though some people are)—we all meet on the level of disciples on the way. It operates under the aegis of the official Church (it's a Diocesan ministry), which is helpful especially with ensuring safeguarding processes working with vulnerable people, and funding a paid coordinator and support person. However, if a new bishop came along who decided he would discontinue this ministry, then there is nothing the hundreds of people involved could do—except continue it outside the auspices of the Church. It is a sobering thought for me—what I have experienced as 'real Church' is at the mercy of a few unelected, unaccountable individuals, whose principal qualifying attributes seem sometimes to be that they are male, and prepared to publicly commit to celibacy, and never publicly question the Church.

I grew up in a small country area some 20 miles from the nearest town. I was one of approximately 18 children that attended a one-teacher school which was some four miles from our farm. Transport to school was by horse, in the very early years 'double up' with an elder sibling or neighbour. We had a creek which used to flood that had to be crossed and my parents had given me instruction on the safe level of the creek over which we were not to attempt a crossing. We could then go to any of the adjacent farms for as long as it took for the creek to return to normal safe levels, mostly one or two days. Telephones were still some years away in our community. I well remember the great kindness shown to us by our neighbours, I look back on those days sometimes and realise that we were very much loved in that community. I think we all realised that it was only through loving each other that it was possible to survive and enjoy life.

The best of my formation has come from my family in my growing years. As well as this, my young adult encounters with the Marists Brothers, work with the Sisters of Mercy, and personal relationships with people I've met on the way: whether priests, nuns, brothers or generally wonderful, humble people who have been generous with their time and friendship. I was a participant in the [-] community many years ago, have worked as a graphic design in the area of social justice and education, participated in a parish social justice group and a sister parish group (with a Timor parish). Now I have an opportunity to work with [-] Catholic schools. Broadly, it's all connected to Church. The Lenten discussion groups are always valuable. The Sunday Mass is the primary way I remain connected to Eucharist and my parish. It's also now about family (husband

<p>and children) and the love and life we share. Saying grace is always a chance to pause and give thanks.</p>
<p>God's grace has helped shape me—grace received via Our Lady through the rosary.</p>
<p>Once I was allowed to ask questions, then my faith began! The examples of lived faith (generosity, servant leadership, active participation in the Church and daily acts of service), school community living out the faith and message of the Gospel every day e.g. supporting families in need, preparation for sacraments.</p>
<p>Fortunately I was blessed with solid faith formation by a number of Marist priests. Being a missionary order their approach to the parish was that it was ours and that priests would come and go but it was our role to form them while they were with us. This parish formation was sufficient momentum for me to apply to [-] Seminary. The parish also had 2 Anglican priests seeking Orders in the Catholic Church, a permanent deacon for the military and 2 other lay people undertaking degrees in theology, scripture and ministry. These were the fruits of good priestly leadership which sought to honour the baptismal gifts of the parishioners.</p>
<p>I am a Catholic and have spent a number of years studying various aspects of theology. I am deeply committed to my faith and have committed my professional life to the formation of young people. I am deeply disillusioned by the bishops' handling of sexual abuse historically and, more recently, their responses to the Royal Commission where they were insincere, self-serving and arrogant.</p>
<p>My faith was shaped by the devotion of the Sisters of Mercy.</p>
<p>The Church provides a positive role in my life as it gives me courage and energy to be a better person. The Church should be able to provide a positive role in Australian society as being a role model for ethics and to provide a source of faith for young people in order to counter the torrents of anxiety and divisive messages in the community.</p>
<p>I am a cradle Catholic and love the Church but I hate the feeling of embarrassment I feel about saying that I am a Catholic today. I am concerned by the rise of conservative thinking within the Church community rather than compassion and outreach.</p>
<p>When I was a child I spoke like a child. I believed totally in fairies and in many forms of magic. Adults not only tolerated, but encouraged, these beliefs, because many of their stories taught me about love, kindness and justice. Now, as an adult of 79 years, if I told people that I totally believe in fairies and magic, I would no doubt be urged to see a psychiatrist. Yet, Sunday after Sunday, I am present at a liturgy where I am supposed to believe that when the priest (therefore always a man) tells me that after he has said some special words he has somehow changed bread and wine into the flesh and blood of someone (Jesus) who died 2000 years ago. I am sure that Jesus used many metaphors in his preaching. At the last supper, for example, he said "Do this in memory of me". Is it possible that the Catholic Church could revise its insistence that we must believe in something that is utterly impossible, belonging only to the world of magic? Could we please have a Communion Rite that does what Jesus asked us to do: "Do this (sharing of a meal) in memory of me?"</p>

After Catholic schooling, involvement in Youth Group and regular attendance of Mass, I left the Church for a very long time after my uncle left the priesthood. The treatment he received from the Church and hierarchy was awful. I wanted nothing to do with an organisation that was supposedly about love that would treat someone who had given so much, so poorly. Nor could I respect the institution for excommunicating a man of great theological study and knowledge, who could communicate Jesus' message to anyone that would listen, because his calling had changed from father of a congregation to father of two beautiful, intelligent children (that came after he left the priesthood, not during). 'Man' had corrupted God's message to suit themselves again. I asked myself, as people sometimes ask me now, "How can you be involved in such an organisation that abuses power so terribly?" While I remained a deeply spiritual person in my time away from the Church, I have returned to the Church as I realised—as with everything—you cannot fix this from the outside, it must come from within. The Church has evolved from a fear of retribution, so it is time to evolve away from rules and traditions formed hundreds of years ago to suit 'man', rules and traditions that bind people in Catholic guilt and evolve towards love—after all, God is love. I hear much of what I have expressed in what Pope Francis is calling us to do, so I am hopeful his leadership will guide us to love, forgiveness, compassion, mercy, and stewardship.

I was unique in that I was born and raised Catholic but encountered Christ through the Protestant Pentecostal Church. I was disillusioned with the Church but sought out spiritual direction, [-] Community (Catholic charismatic) and the Jesuits for Spiritual Direction. Since having a family of my own, I have primarily just gone to my parish and experienced God there. But my children are bored, disillusioned and do not connect. We have started also going to the local Baptist Church to give them another experience of God and Church.

Working in a Catholic school has changed my views and traditions/morals and values.

It is near impossible to support the Catholic Church when those who hypocritically demonstrate their faith by adherence to orthodoxy yet have committed heinous crimes. This has shattered my faith in clergy and God's power.

I have had such wonderful, positive male and female role models in my formative years. I, and others I spoke to, had only respect for the priests, brothers and nuns whom I interacted with. Their faith and belief was an inspiration. Nowadays the RE coordinators and chaplains and some staff at school continue that wonderful tradition.

I am a lifelong Catholic, who has gone through waves of adherence at different times in my life. At the end of high school I made a conscience choice to leave the Church and remember asking God to leave me alone because I wanted to make different choices without feeling bad. God gave me space. 6 years later my younger sister starting running youth groups, and I joined in to help her as I knew Scripture and liturgy from my own youth groups days. After a while I began to feel like a hypocrite, and a friend suggested I go to reconciliation. I spent about 45 minutes with the priest talking about my past and I came out of that experience feeling incredible—like a burdened had been lifted. That priest gave me an experience of unconditional love, just listening, not judging, and I have been an active and faithful Catholic since. I have volunteered with [-] ministries Australia, worked in local youth groups in [-] and [-], and ministered and taught in Catholic schools for over ten years (4th as teacher). I want to see an active and alive Church speaking God's

word and witnessing to God's love in Australia, but have become a bit disillusioned with the structures of the Church and ineffectiveness of the local parish and local priest. I have lots of questions and few solutions, but I am hopeful.

I was a very, very shy young girl and adolescent. It was through a youth "Search" weekend (there were our peers speaking to us as well as an older nun guiding and participating); that my Faith was first ignited. I then belonged to a Catholic Charismatic community that deepened my faith immensely. It was family based with single youth, widows, couples and families with young and older children. We lived in our own home but attended Mass together, participated in prayer meetings, reflecting and a prayer "phone tree" for urgent support. We supported and interacted on many social occasions as well. I have always been encouraged to pray the rosary and attend Mass by my parents and grandparents. They also made real to me that we encounter God in our "everyday".

World Youth Days have been very moving experiences for me.

My story is intimately connected with the impact of women in the Church. My mother and her female companions in my childhood Church were true examples of committed, giving and caring parishioners. Dealing and navigating the sexist, male dominated leadership structures they ran the parish, they carried the parish priest they created community; albeit limited by governance. Imagine what our Church would look like today if there was no impediment to women leading our faith communities. In my 57 years they were by far the most effective, genuine and believable members of parish. Credibility is critical moving forward. Our story or the next big chapter must be feminised.

I actually embraced Jesus through the Pentecostal movement. I was a nominal Anglican and it took a radical shift away to make faith come alive for me. I know many Catholics with the same story. I have embraced the Catholic Church via [-] in [-]. There is no question in my mind that traditional parish live most of us know it has to end. That will cause many older "non- believers" to no longer attend Mass. But they will be replaced by the Catholics who come for the right reasons. So Church has to take a big leap in Faith to stay alive.

1. About 20 years ago the son of a member of our group; who was still clinging to the remnants of his Catholic faith; wanted to get married by a Catholic priest in a garden setting. He asked 5 different priests but when he received 5 different, negative answers, the wedding was conducted by a very obliging, wonderful Baptist minister. After the wedding service he was told by the local parish priest "yes I would have married you in the garden setting" but he was not considered initially because of his very dogmatic approach to many other questions.
2. Thanks and praise to those who are guiding our children.

My cynical views have come from immigrating to Australia and expecting to find practicing Catholic Families at Catholic Schools but instead have found many families that are only interested in having their children receive the sacraments in order to have the right paperwork to be successful in their application to Catholic high schools. I am a cradle Catholic, my husband is a convert and our hope and prayer is that our children will remain in the Faith when they are adults. The experience we have had at Catholic primary school is that the occasional Mass that the school attends is the only Mass that most of the children ever go to. It is disheartening. And I have heard

parents complain about having to attend the lessons to have their children receive the sacraments. We continue to pray for a return to the Faith.

I am the youngest of ten children who were raised Catholic. I have taught in Catholic primary schools for 29 years and am often disappointed by the role models in our churches. I struggle with finding that welcoming church community that people want to attend and be part of. I see many charitable acts but am confused by what priests see as important with our church services.

I was faced by two SDA workmates every lunch time in my workplace who would try to convert me to their church. I tried to answer some of their questions but you see I did not know enough about my Faith to counter their attacks. So I did some research and found Apologetics from people like Scott Hahn and Tim Staples and Steve Ray, all converts to the Catholic Church by the way. This is where I truly found my Faith and the beauty of it. It became exciting for me to be Catholic and has been ever since. I cannot state strongly enough how much our people need Apologetics after they have accepted Christ and His Church in an adult way. God bless.

I became a Catholic about 20 years ago and have been saddened to hear the reprehensible actions of the Clergy. That said my faith is still strong in our Church. God, Jesus and the holy Church have been a great support in my life and its ups and downs. Being part of this amazing faith has allowed me to see and experience things that I could only imagine (meeting The Pope personally). I believe that God does not cause bad things to happen but is there to support us if we just give him a chance, so I am sure that Jesus has not given up on us in our time of need.

I am forever grateful to my mother for taking me to Mass every week when I was younger. My true experience of faith happened years later after hearing a talk about Medjugorje. God filled me completely! The love I felt was amazing and I cried and cried. As a child I was fearful of confession and church in general but I had good experiences with the nuns at my primary school though not so good at high school! I stopped going to Mass for a short time in my twenties but returned when having our children. I have attended and been involved in parish life for a long time, facilitating youth groups and faith education video presentations. I cantor at Mass and love singing in praise of God. I am blessed. I have some very good friends who are priests and I consider myself privileged to know them! They are a blessing to me! I have also had a very bad experience with a priest. This has not affected my faith. The disappointment and hurt after hearing the experiences of victims of clerical abuses has upset and disgusted me. I pray for these people and hope the Church gives them the acknowledgment and support they need. I have great respect for Pope Francis. He is a wonderful shepherd, and after meeting him I can understand a little of how it felt to be with Jesus. Please help us to make our Church a place we are proud of and love.

Sadly I allowed human failings, including mine, within the Catholic Church to interfere with my relationship with our Lord God, Jesus Christ. I return to the Church at [-] having found the perfect example and spiritual leader in [-].

I had a wonderful Year 2 teacher called Sr [-] who was a living example of the Christian faith and shared age-appropriate history and culture of the faith. I knew that it was real. I was not confused as many are today because she knew how to impart this information.

I was brought up in the Church although my mother was an atheist but she made a promise when she married my Catholic father and she sent me to a Catholic Church and made sure I went to Mass every Sunday. I was very disappointed when I could not serve the Mass when only the priest and I were in attendance. The priest looked upset that he had to bar me from the altar when I was so desperate to ring the bell and help him pour the water and wine. The Mercy nuns worked hard to educate us at a tiny country Primary school and I was very fond of Srs [-] and [-]. Later at secondary school in [-] I was intellectually challenged by the Good Samaritans esp. Sister [-] and [-] (Science) and sang my homesickness away. I then stayed at the Grail hostel [-] where [-], [-] and [-] introduced me to a new European model of Catholicism which I follow to this day. I attended the ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin with French, German and Dutch Grail members and was blown away by the ideas and the music. We staged a prayer vigil outside a detention centre—it was a protest really but they could only get permission for a prayer vigil but we did say plenty of prayers. We were sad to hear that one of the Catholic priests had been prevented from giving Communion to all comers which he had been doing until presumably reported. I attended an International Grail Assembly recently in Portugal and was impressed with the work the Grail was doing internationally—especially in Africa. We are a small group in [-] and part of the National Team leading the Grail in Australia. There is a small Grail Nucleus in [-] who have dedicated their lives to the Grail in poverty, chastity and obedience—[-], [-], [-], [-] but most of the rest of us are married with children and grandchildren. The African Grail is the most active running schools, hospitals, micro-finance programs etc. We support young women in leadership programs in Mozambique and New York working on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Commission for the Status of Women and have just welcomed back [-] from a leadership course in Mozambique. The Grail is an international movement of women trusting in the Spirit of God, mystery and source of life—called to create a sustainable world transforming the planet into place of peace and justice. Rosemary Goldie, who served as undersecretary for the Pontifical Council for the Laity 1967–76 was a Grail member. Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, PM of Portugal in 1979 was a Grail member. The rest of us are much more humble and try to follow *Laudato Si'* and preserve the planet while keeping up with intellectual and social developments in Catholic and multi-faith thought. We help organise Days for Girls projects in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. Women want to help the Church. We want to work in co-operation with men to make things better.

The Church isn't inclusive—the Eucharistic table should be open to all. I worked with Churched Anglicans who couldn't receive communion while non-practising Catholics could. Silly. Bishops who are informed about sexual abuse must report it to police.

I am a female who was born into a Baptist family and was active in the Baptist Church. I married a Catholic who told me he did not want to be married in a church as he had been "over" Catholic in his family. We moved in 2008 and for 12 months I did not go to any new Church but the spiritual aspect of my life was not in balance and I went looking for a church in the new locality. As my husband's family is VERY Catholic (mercy Nun etc.) I decided to have a look at the Catholic Church. I went church "shopping" as we lived in the middle of an area where 4 Catholic Churches were located and I decided attend to attend each of the 4 for 2 weeks. The first two paid me no attention and I did not understand the service at all. The third Church had projection screens which told you what to say or sing or do during the service and this Church also had greeters at

the door who noticed that I was new and talked to me and found someone in the church to sit next to me. In general they made me feel included. The 4th Church was much the same as the first two so I decided to continue with [-] parish. I went to RCIA and continued through the process and eventually joined the choir. After three years my husband came to the Easter service and then after a few weeks he came again and then he joined the choir and came back to the Catholic Faith.

One student said that in [-] Fr [-] was really great because he was relevant to the kids because he was young, but now they don't relate to the new priest.

I have lived in parishes with Order priests and also in parishes with Diocesan Clergy. There is a great difference in the Pastoral outcome in each parish. Diocesan Clergy are extremely worldly, and it is passed on to the laity. Their formation as priests is wanting in their relation to the People of God. We do not need married priests. I live in a parish where the priest In Charge is a married priest. The conflict of his living out of his marriage vows and his priestly vocation to the Laity is noticeable.

In 2018, Dami Im inspired me with her music and works of charity leading me to move from working for justice to working for charity through the [-], [-] project and [-] rescuing slaves etc. Also I am learning music and have decided to donate all money made from music to works of charity. I have battled the global elite for 30 years now is the time to work for charity and learn music on my personal journey. The future is new and my life has changed forever.

God's Holy Spirit awakened me to His love and mercy for me and for others. It called and challenged me to allow Him to capture my heart and life in a way I could never have imagined was possible. It was real. It changed me forever. I spoke to someone who was legally declared permanently insane. That night the person began to move towards a life of freedom in God and eventually celebrated 50 years of marriage with all the extended family present. Many lives had been mended from the destruction that threatened this family many years earlier. It was just so wonderful to see how God is beyond the wisdom of man but uses man to accomplish His purposes if we are open to His Holy Spirit.

Perhaps, a defining experience was an Easter Saturday night, when I was approached after Mass, by my parish priest and the Josephite Principal of our parish school with a story that went something like this after some conversation. "We have been thinking that we would like to ask you to consider taking over the REC (Religious Education Coordinator) role in our parish school community. We would like you to consider it seriously and let us know if you would take up the role." Having been a relief teacher in the school, a member of the parish, and my four children had and were attending school there, I was shocked that they were asking a 'lay' person to take over a role that over the last 33 years was ministered by the sisters of St Joseph. What a calling! After much soul searching, I accepted, and so began an amazing opportunity to serve my school and parish community in a way never envisioned. That step led to further roles including APRE and Principal of a Catholic School. What a blessed faith journey it has been. My God was ever present, leading and guiding, challenging, building and transforming my life! The other experience that shaped my faith was the time my brother, who was a priest in the Archdiocese, told me that after 22 of dedicated service to the Church, that he had found a different challenge of love and ministry, and he was leaving the active ministries as a priest, professor, lecturer and giver of life

and love to the Church to marry. During his passage away from priesthood is when I saw and felt that the rhetoric of those in authority within the Church did not match the gospel message of love and compassion given to all and especially your own. I seriously questioned my future involvement in all matters of faith—will I abandon my community as my brother’s community abandoned him? It was a very hurtful and challenging time for my family and for me. I saw the worst and the best of the clergy and sometimes nothing that resembled the gospel message. In time I resolved to believe that the actions of some in the Church hierarchy did not define my relationship and faith in my God. I separated the institutional Church from my relationship with my God. I resolved to work within the Church to bring about, where possible, a change of attitude and action, where the gospel was authentically walked through service and the model of Christ as Teacher and servant of all. It is still a work in progress in my life, as I continue to be involved as a parishioner in service, over time, through pastoral council work, parish finance work, music ministry, hospitality and striving to build the body of Christ through authentic relationships of love and care, and through authentic stewardship. Faith without good work is...

Yes. Since I joined CCR [-] (recently) it has changed my life spiritually. I attended a Grace of Baptism seminar and during the seminar, during Praise and Worship, I felt this intense closeness to Jesus with tears just rolling down my face. I was a practising Catholic before this, but I now have a commitment to daily prayers, daily Gospel readings and try to increase my participation in as many Church activities as I can.

The Catholic Church has come a long way. When I was young and making my first communion, I was segregated from the parish school children because I attended a state school. Thankfully we have come past that, and are now more inclusive. I used to be visited by various other religious denominations who seriously challenged my faith, so I set out to seek answers to the questions they posed—I needed to know why I believed what I believed so that I could 'defend' myself. I decided to do the [-] courses and learn more. There I met the most interesting lecturers I have ever had the pleasure of listening to—[-], [-], Fr [-]—and so I commenced six years of theology, plus I taught religious education as part of the Religious Education in State Schools team. I expressed my concerns with [-] and told him I was always challenging my faith, and he gave me the courage to keep on seeking the truth. Now I feel stronger as I am armed with more knowledge of the scriptures and my faith. I am time-poor but I try to participate in as many activities with the Church as I can. For example my participation in the [-]—expressing my faith in the richness of the Italian culture.

Those who attended the two sessions did not actually write any of this down although I do know that lots of faith stories were shared at all levels—faith that had survived despite some of the things that had happened to people over the years, not just abuse but also the way sometimes people were treated (or felt they were treated). So despite this people are still strong in their faith—We know the Holy Spirit is moving in people’s lives so even if things appear to be deteriorating.—Christ is with us and keeps us strong. A larger number of parishioners in the parish are engaging in faith based groups for meditation, prayer and increasing their understanding of the story that God is reaching out to us in love and mercy.

About ten years ago a few of the men of our parish decided to do something to support the other men of our parish. They decided to meet of a Friday afternoon from 5pm at the local Irish pub. We

called it Choir Practice! It is a small group, as few as two at times or ten on a good day. There is no agenda apart from, "What is happening in your life this week?" Of course, all being from the one local Catholic community, the talk often is about what is happening in the local and wider Church. But basically it is all about supporting one another and accepting each other where we are. We think it is a good faith story.

No matter where I have roamed or what I have done over my life the Church has always been there as a steady rock. However, now the rock of the Church is being undermined and the stability and strength of the Church is being visibly weakened.

I have been moved and spiritually fed by the great preaching of Fr. [-] at [-] Catholic Church at [-]. He has a great gift of using the gospel, self and passion to preach the word of God.

In 2003 myself and a small band of brothers decided to try to do something about the diminishing male involvement in parish life. Not only in parish life but also in Marriage and Family Life. We started a little work in the Church called [-]. Since our humble beginnings in 16 years of ministry we have run 450 events in 26 dioceses for more than 25,000 men. Many men have experienced in a new way the loving merciful Father. Many have heard the call to become beloved sons of God. To take up the challenge to be: better men, better husbands, better fathers, better men of God. Many have restored marriages, many have learnt how to raise sons and daughters, many have taken up leadership roles in parishes, many have become missionary's themselves. We have believed an audacious dream—If we can reach the man we will reach the marriage, if we can reach the marriage we will reach the family and if we can reach the family we will reach the Church. In reaching the Church we can reach this nation one man at a time. Change the man change the Church. There are many many stories below are some testimonies:—"By far the most relevant, meaningful, informative and achievably challenging Church event I have ever had in 53 years of Catholicism" and "Fantastic weekend, extremely well presented and life changing. Great group of presenters. One of the treasures in the Church of Australia. A must do for men." and "Thanks for an insightful, loving and wild at heart weekend. I came in not knowing God's plan for me and left with a road map. THANK YOU!" and "I found the weekend a powerful step with me seeking to reconnect myself spiritually with the Catholic Church after a long period of feeling distant." And "This proved very informative and am sure it will make me a better person, husband and father and will greatly deepen my love of God." and "Our Church needs this ministry so badly. I needed this ministry so badly.....The personal sharing made the teachings come alive and relevant to my Life." and lastly " I came to this event ready to leave my wife, family and Church! I go home motivated to rebuild! Rebuild my marriage, rebuild my relationship with my children and possibly event to rebuild my Church. I have been received the Life Change necessary and also given the tools to move forward. I am a new man! Thank-you.

People of my generation were raised as Catholics not to question anything, just be a believer. The young generations are more questioning and look at Religion, from a scientific background.

I am a convert of some 30 plus years. I have come from a different religious background, Methodist mother, Presbyterian father. My experience with the Catholic Church has not always been pleasant. I entered the Church when I was a young adult. My opinions and the Church's did not always mesh. I felt I could not speak my mind to my parish priest of the time as I always felt

that they considered me beneath them. So my faith was tested often. I still attended Mass every week, observed holy days etc. but was unsatisfied. My children were brought up as Catholics even though I was struggling in my faith. The last few years I have had the privilege of attending Mass within a wonderful community where I feel at peace and have enjoyed my faith with confidence. My husband and I have moved 13 times both overseas and within Australia, so I have met and been involved with quite a few parishes. I have worked in those parishes and within Catholic schools for over 20 years and so have closely worked with priests, nuns and lay people. It is only now I can honestly say I have met two priests, one retired and on supply, and the other a parish priest that have made all the years in the wilderness worthwhile. I'm glad I continued to attend Mass in the face of some despair because I would have missed the opportunity of meeting these two wonderful people.

Following a wonderful vocation of secondary Chemistry and Mathematics teaching in government and Catholic schools, I felt called to live my baptism in another way. Sr [-], while Pastoral Associate at [-] Catholic Church, recognised my thirst for learning and encouraged me to take up theological studies, and the rest is history. My years of voluntary and professional pastoral ministry in [-], [-] and again in [-] have been greatly enriched by journeying with gifted and Spirit-filled clergy and parishioners, especially with families involved in sacramental preparation and celebration. I also enjoyed my part-time work in [-] with the [-] team writing and facilitating Certificate III and IV courses in Ministry and Theology for secondary teachers and lay pastoral ministers. During this time when Christianity, particularly Catholicism, was (and still is) facing many challenges, it was wonderful to be contacted by parents wanting to prepare for and celebrate sacraments of initiation with their child or children. The gentle hand of God's steadfast love and faithfulness is manifest in our young families. My husband [-] and I each turned 70 years of age during 2018 and now in retirement we are enjoying having more time to spend with our family, especially our grandchildren.

My mother and father came from good Christian families with prayer in the home and strong faith. While my mother prayed daily in private, I didn't see my father praying except at Mass. One of my aunties endured suffering in her life but always remained positive. She lost a 2 year old child, nearly lost her other child in a car accident, her husband died, she lost eyesight in both eyes but always remained strong in faith, positive and giving to others ... a great role Christian role model. I have experienced in my own life the power of prayer at critical times. It would be easy to abandon an angry wife or a troublesome child but that would not be an act of love. More is needed to help couples in relationships. It has never been more difficult to be a married couple or parent with changed role expectations, technology etc.

I have been an active member of the Church since I was a young child. I have lost faith with the Church. I still attend, but not every Sunday as I used to.

1. My son was an altar boy in our parish and the priest was charged with paedophilia. Parishioners were not advised of the truth, but were told that the priest was having an extended holiday. My neighbour, a non-Catholic, told me what had happened.

2. I then joined a Marist parish which was wonderful. The Marists eventually had to leave that parish due to lack of priests. There were a number of temporary appointments and one of the priests (I am not sure now whether he was our permanent parish priest), was charged with having

child pornography on his computer. My trust has been dented.
 3. I am divorced. I am not in a relationship with anyone else, but if I were, that would be an issue. I don't believe Jesus would abandon me, but the Church would.

I was and 'unchurched', having moved interstate and not finding a connection to my previous church in my new location. I was drawn to the Catholic Church through a Multicultural event held at a nearby church, drawing together and celebrating our cultures. I felt included and welcomed. I was teaching Aboriginal children in central Australia. They had learnt the story of Zacchaeus. When one child climbed high in a tree during a tantrum, they couldn't be negotiated down. I walked out, looked up and called 'Zacchaeus, come out of the tree'. In a fit of laughter the child came down. The Gospel story working to bring us all closer. During Mass, the Gospel reading of "Love" moved me. I looked over to my Husband and children who appeared to have their eyes closed and not paying attention. I felt disappointed and angry. I prayed. At home later that day, I told by family how disappointed I was that they weren't listening to the Gospel reading that day. With that, they started to recite the Gospel—"Love is patient", "Love is kind", "Love is not quick to judge". They had all heard and I was filled with joy; that they had shared with me in experiencing the beauty of God's Word.

We have followed what the Church told us to believe even though some priest and religious did not follow those teaching.

I am a lifelong Catholic mother of five and grandmother of fifteen. I have been married for 55 years, say my prayers every day and never miss Mass. I have close relatives who are priests and nuns but weep to see most of the children no longer have faith in the Church despite a Catholic upbringing and schooling. They see the Church as hypocritical, arrogant and inflexible. Some tell me they still pray but will not darken a Church door. I don't think I will live to see the changes the Church must make to recapture the message of Jesus but every day I pray that this will eventuate.

I am a convert to the Church. I was once proud to be Catholic. Over the past number of years I have been disappointed in the Church's response and silence on matters that concern me, particularly social justice. I did not attend Mass for most of 2018 however I have returned to Mass after reading some articles by Pope Francis. I am a teacher in the Catholic system. I came back to the Church because I don't want to be a hypocrite—I want to be a role model for my students as a person who is Catholic but also a human being, and that it is okay to have doubts about the Church in Australia and its direction. I firmly believe in order to bring about change, you must stay in the Church and not "throw stones" from outside. You can only bring about change from the inside...

I was blessed to be part of a spiritual renewal led by 3 fine young priests, who have now left the priesthood and married ... a tragic loss to the Catholic body... who led our Church to becoming Baptized in the Holy Spirit. What an eye opener! Faith deepening! Desiring of the word of God in the Bible experience that was ... and still growing in the Holy Spirit and desiring more and more to know the Word of God. From this I have joined non-denominational Christian women's groups and learned so much about Jesus and the Bible that I never hear and learn in the Catholic Church unfortunately. I struggle with attending Mass now and go to other Christian churches for "Feeding"... if I hadn't been Baptized in the Holy spirit back then and grown to Christ based

teaching, I know I would have fallen away from God and Church as I thought that the lack of Catholic was the only way ... my walk in Christian faith now has seen me devour, teachings, preachings, literature and amazing Christian preachers when they come to where I live, so that I can learn about GOD and the BIBLE. I have been to Israel to do a 'Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus' tour ... talk about a God given amazing gift!!! Sadly as a person who has identified all my life as Catholic, I no longer encourage my children or those to whom I have had the pleasure of outreaching to the Catholic Church ... I encourage them to a Bible teaching Christian church where they will learn about God, not religion. My husband has come in small steps to know God, and have a couple of friends husbands who live in other areas to me and we feel we can't take them to "church" as there is the ritual, but not the awe pulling, Bible teaching, 'let me be one of you Christian people' call in our churches. I sit at Mass at times, and shake my head as I know I simply could not see him in the place as it is. The people are on the whole, lovely people, but sadly, we have non-Churching, even non-Christian friends, who show more love and support and outreach than our own Catholics.

I work with students daily in regard to liturgy and I see how they can be transformed and encounter Jesus when liturgy is creatively planned and age appropriate. It does take time and much prayer and discernment are needed but the results are life changing.

I very happily lead a very contemporary life with my husband. Through life, I have walked with God in and out of the many challenges and pain of life and the wonders of life, none of which would I have had without the love of God. It is unimaginable to me to think of not having faith to walk with God. The gift of life in this World is beautiful if it is seen. The poor, egalitarian leadership, of Christianity led to a misunderstanding of interpretation of the Bible, a waste of a good deal of life, while own faith in God's goodness never wavered. The leadership of sound Spiritual Development has been healing mentally and physically.

I left my husband in 2000, after years of psychological and emotional abuse. He often used my faith, and connection to my church to attack me. I didn't feel supported by my parish or priest, and felt a great deal of shame at the ending of my marriage. I still find it hard to return to that church, and it took quite a few years to return to my faith practices. My children were teenagers, and now have little to do with a church, which they see as having no relevance to them. One identifies as gay, and or possibly intersex. There is no real pathway for them or me. When I did discuss the Church's only option to recognise the end of the marriage, the process of determining if it had been a valid marriage, my children and I had two reactions,
1] it was not safe for us—as it require getting his side of the story, and he does not recognise any of his behaviour as abusive, and is certain that all the problems were caused by me, and
2] it would negate 20 years of marriage, and my children felt it left them as nothing.
At the same time, I have been welcomed into another parish, and valued for what I can bring in a range of ministry. I feel strongly called to remain this church that I was born into, and I hope that in telling you these things, I speak for many who only ask that as a Church, we find positive constructive ways to respond to the many life challenges so many of us face. I feel lucky and grateful to the people, including priests, who did reach out and try to help me.

My God has provided for me on a daily basis pouring his love through me into the sharing hearts of others. We sailed on a boat called [-] for 8 years and at first we thought that God was calling

us to mission and the mission was right in front of us. He wanted us to consolidate our family into a strong faith filled people right from the time our children were born. We had three babies on this yacht through those years and they witness our faith in an unfailing God as a daily ritual. By having a yacht we had no financial commitments as we surrendered our old life of work and this gave us the fortunate position of both parents being there for our babies' development years from 1 to 5 years. Those years are vital to produce strong, well adjusted, self-assuring and confident children who really know they are loved and never be abandoned. The everyday ordinary family in God's eyes is the crux of our society.

The moments that the Church has moved me have been moments of transcendence, and moments of service. The image of my Archbishop, surrounded by clergy and servers, kneeling before the Blessed sacrament on Holy Thursday night, with the voices of the choir mingling with the smoke of the incense: that moment moved me to tears: all that beauty for our God, present on that little altar. Helping my local Missionaries of Charity sisters at their soup kitchen: seeing that a 'poor Church for the poor' can be such a good influence. And not just on the people who we serve: the community of volunteers has given me a little Catholic community that I have never had anywhere else.

Catholic schools in Australia need to review their effectiveness in spreading the faith. They are clearly ineffective because our churches of a Sunday see so few young people in attendance. Also I have spoken to graduates of Catholic schools and been surprised to learn that some do not even know the story of Easter. Also some schools have clearly set themselves apart as elitist places of education, if that is what they in the main are then they should be nominally that and not nominally a Catholic school. If collectively all the Catholic schools in Australia are just places of education that should be acknowledged, and the Church should look at more targeted ways of spreading the faith amongst young people. It might fund this by selling the schools. Replace the Catechist way of becoming a Catholic The traditional Catechist way of becoming a Catholic is a fail. Most Churches are lucky to have more than 3 candidates each Easter. It would be better to find a sermon on the mount group method. People find safety in numbers. Also it would speed up the process.

I would like to share my life experience after the death of my wife at a young age. My personal tragedy agitated my faith tremendously. However, the final outcome of the incident consolidated my Christian belief, after I had contemplated many verses of the Bible. The most influential verse was Mathew 19:6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh." My feeling of losing my wife was exactly how the Bible states.

We are all conscious of the damage that has been done to the Church through the lack of priests and religious. We would like the Australian Church to seriously consider changes to Church laws so that it would make it easier to recruit priests and religious. For more priests, would it not be possible for laicised, married men to return to their ministry, for married men to be ordained and for more deacons to be ordained to lift some of the load from the parish priests? Would it not also be desirable for priests to retain celibacy as an optional sign of the presence of the Kingdom in the Church?

My general belief is fuelled by the teachings of Jesus, inspired by Mark Mackillop and the mainly good people I have encountered, a couple of Marist Brothers, members of the St Vincent de Paul Society and especially Fr [-] and the Spiritan priests of [-] parish. I also had a personal experience when living in [-]. My brother had a serious accident and was given a 5% chance of survival. The next morning I was flying the [-] to join my family at his bedside. Before leaving I went to attend early morning Mass but the Church was closed as the parish priest was away for the day. A visiting priest happened to be there and invited me into the sacristy to a Mass with him. He offered the Mass up for my brother. Against the odds my brother survived, albeit with some physical and cognitive impairment he is able to live independently.

The Anglican church of [-] in [-] (thanks to Bishop [-]) showed me that as a faith community we can actively participate in all matters to bring compassion and justice to refugees and asylum seekers. [-] in [-], a church I joined only recently, opened my eyes to what a modern day faith community should be, no hierarchy, no rigid rituals, no blind faith, that everyone is equal regardless of gender, gender orientation, skin colour or where you came from, that we can have intelligent discussions based on science and facts.

The death of my father at a young age and my loving family gave me the basis of my faith—to believe in life eternal. I have a long career history with Catholic education and have worked in marginalised areas. This gives me a hope for the future that we can make a difference through faith and compassion for others. I belong to a parish with a current parish priest who is contemporary and challenges us authentically. This is rare and I hope for a future that we can have Church leaders including clergy that are representative of the People—female, married, single.

Witnessed departure of Fr [-], Fr [-], Fr [-].

I was brought up in a Christian home and thank God for that. At the age of fifty one I felt that my spiritual life was not in good health. I decided to attend church services of other denominations. The local Roman Catholic parish was the closest so my wife and I went along. The liturgy of the Mass had a profound effect on both of us. We felt like we had come home. In time, after visiting with some other denominations we settled into the local RC parish. We enjoyed the RCIA journey and were confirmed at the Easter Vigil. About seventeen years later I attended a Cursillo retreat and it also renewed my faith and helped me understand more about community. We are involved in a small Rosary group at the moment and the friendship and joy that has brought to me has been incredible. I am so glad that God brought me to the Church and that it was in the post Vatican II era. The people really are the body of Christ along with all true believers.

I have been a committed Christian for 50 years, attending a Seventh-Day Adventist Church regularly but always feeling something was missing. In that time I went through a divorce. I married a second time. Both of our previous marriages had ended due to infidelity of our individual spouses. My husband and I felt the need to explore other religions as we both felt the need to understand other faiths. The first church we attended was the local Catholic Church. We both felt an immediate deeply spiritual connection. We went to two other denominations but neither felt right. Thus began our Journey of Faith in the Catholic Church. We joined the RCIA and 20 years ago we were both confirmed and thank God daily that he led us to know God, Jesus, the

Holy Spirit and Mary better. We are still friends with our Adventist friends and have developed a good relationship with our ex-spouses. We both feel that seeking annulment of our first marriages would harm this. Thus we have the dilemma of Holy Communion. We would love to share our story openly as we believe a God led us on this journey, but always feel the need to be a little secretive about it. There must be many couples in Australia who have gone through divorce and have that little nagging thought that, perhaps, they should not be partaking of Holy Eucharist.

The Church for me has always been an experience of God's love and values of showing love and respect for ourselves and for all people. It has been a positive experience of community and living with compassion and acceptance. These are the values which we need to live by and the Church and all its members are accountable to God to show his love to one another.

Before my marriage I was a practising Anglican, but I chose to take on the Catholic faith and I never doubted my decision until my daughter applied for an annulment of her marriage due to her husband committing adultery. The annulment was refused which horrified us as the reason given was in favour of her husband, who I may say was not a Catholic nor a practising Church attendee. We subsequently lodged an appeal after I assisted in comprising a letter stating several extracts from scripture. Whilst the appeal was granted in our favour, I was disappointed that faceless clergy who have no idea of marital situations do not think outside the square and just rule in favour of the male. I can truthfully say our Catholic faith was tested and I know of many people who have had the same dreadful experience. Many leave the Church feeling let down due to no fault of their own. Jesus preached inclusiveness of all, not discrimination, therefore divorcees, gay and others who may appear different should not be ostracised by man-made rules.

I am a member of [-] parish [-] City [-]. I am a [-] year old woman. I have previously been involved in Ministries within the local parish such as Communion Minister to a nursing home and in the Church itself. Currently I am a Catholic Prison Chaplain at [-] Correctional Centre, the largest high security gaol for men in [-]. In [-] all chaplains are volunteers from different Christian denominations working as a team across the week. This system differs to other states in that there is not one formally appointed, paid chaplain but a group of dedicated volunteers. I am also Secretary/Treasurer of [-], which is a St Vincent de Paul Conference set up to assist inmates at [-] both within the gaol and on release. Each Friday we visit the inmates, and see God at work in their lives. We currently have 11 men on our Communion list in the gaol, men who have made their first Holy Communion and grew up in the Catholic Faith, men who greatly appreciate the notion that Jesus comes in person to them. They look forward to us coming and are ready when we arrive in their units. Other men, who are Christians but not Catholic, often join us and share in the prayers. I have often had 6–8 young men sitting or standing following the Catholic liturgy and saying the responses. There is a wonderful energy within the unit as we say the 'Our Father' together. I would like very much that they could be welcomed to Catholic Churches when they leave gaol and have company in their future faith journeys.

At age 15, I attended a Summer School of Evangelisation run by the Disciples of Jesus community. I went to my small group leaders in great distress, confusion, and desperation one evening, asking them to pray with me. We went alone to a room and prayed for the Spirit to move, and the Spirit moved. What followed was a profound encounter with the Risen Lord. My entire being was exposed to the awesome power and love of God and all barriers and veils between my weak flesh

and the eternal one who is the foundation of the world and Truth incarnate were lifted. Nearing two decades later that one joyous encounter with the Lord has informed the rest of my life. I now know within the core of my being the profound unity of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, found in fullest harmony in Jesus Christ. Without it I would not have had the strength to follow the Lord faithfully. We went into that room trusting in the transformative power of the Spirit and we all left transformed—new creations. Discarded Beauty and Tradition: I have witnessed in the sacristy safes of many parishes the most beautiful gold chalices (paid for with the donations of past parishioners) being left unused week after week in favour of ‘simpler’ vessels such as pewter. When I questioned a sacristan about it she said that they were kept for special occasions, but even then they remained unused during great feasts. I find this to be a metaphor for the state of so many things in our Church. Through my own studies into the traditions of the Church, I have found so many hidden treasures of great value and beauty, things that helped me to finally make sense of our faith, that had been callously discarded in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. It was like finding jewel encrusted crucifixes thrown aside to the ground simply because the body of Christ was being obscured by a few centuries of accrued grime. Rather than restore the crucifix to its original glory through careful cleaning, it had been discarded in favour of two ugly sticks tied together. I felt betrayed that I had been so deprived of the inheritance of my forebears in the faith due to the misguided ideology of a single generation. There is an active and dishonest antagonism against beauty in our liturgy that is deeply saddening and a great disservice to the faithful and the Church mission of evangelisation.

A few years ago, I was a sponsor and teacher on a parish RCIA team. One night, we were gathered in the Church for an RCIA session, about 8:30pm. Suddenly, someone could be heard banging frantically on the door of the Church. The parish priest and the RCIA leader went to the door. There was a distraught, hysterical woman crying on the doorstep, alone in the dark. She reached out to the priest, and it turned out that he had buried her son in the Church earlier that day. She had come back to the Church, as the last place she had seen her son. Much like Mary Magdalene returning to Christ’s tomb. I will never forget the priest’s response to her grief. Instead of welcoming her in, sitting with her, praying for her son, or recognising her, he pushed her away and told her to go home. He did not offer to take her home or call a taxi, even though she was not in a fit state of mind. He just wanted her to go away. He was very concerned about making sure the doors of the Church were locked, because of security; perhaps he didn’t want to disrupt the RCIA group (although his lack of compassion did that anyway). The RCIA leader went out with her and sat with her in the carpark. The Church should not be run by bureaucracy. Men who become priests should not be cultivated into administrators and bureaucrats first, and pastors last. I don’t enjoy going to Mass. I find Mass to be uninviting and boring. The liturgy does not lift my soul. I rarely feel God’s presence there. I think of Church in two different ways—“going to church” is a lifeless building, where my presence is required, which doesn’t lift me or nourish my spirituality; which often fails to be welcoming or inclusive; which frequently asks me for more money, another collection, another charity, always hand in the pocket. The real way I know Church is outside of the building—it is at my workplace, among my colleagues, who work tirelessly for Christ; it is these people that sustain my faith and inspire me. I just wish that going to church felt like going home. I am fortunate that God is at work in my life, in and through people I work with; otherwise, I, like so many others, including many of those who go through RCIA, would eventually, end up

never returning. Sometimes I wonder why I am still Catholic, and I know it is because of God and the people—not the Church institution. Please don't let the Church go out with a whimper. I have heard many stories about women being treated without kindness and love regarding pregnancy, miscarriage, and stillbirth. Please consider adjusting liturgy and funeral prayers for the unborn. Please consider that sometimes contraception might be acceptable and the only safe option. Please stop making judgements about women's bodies.

Attendance at Proclaim conference, in [-], last year has changed me personally, from someone that is very happy with my relationship with Jesus to someone who is keen to share the this experience.

In 1963, in the [-] township of [-] at Mass one Sunday morning God reached me in a way I cannot describe and from then on was real in my life. Since then I have had many adventures with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From that day on I never had any doubt about my Christian commitment and I found the strength to do what the Lord wanted of me. God can bring this about, as he did in my case, apparently with no human help. I think, though, that is one of the reasons that Jesus began a Church ...

I grew up in a conservative Catholic family that came mainly from my mother's side. This instilled a sure belief that God was real, and that prayer is important, particularly praying with our Lady. Going to Mass was where God was for me and saying your prayers was certainly important, but other than that God outside of these contexts wasn't there, unless it had direct relation to the church community itself. When I moved from [-] to [-] on the sunny [-], I eventually got involved in the Youth Group at Church, which led me to a beautiful charismatic event called '[-]', which happens monthly in [-]. Here I saw a large group of youth varying in age like my own praising God with all their heart. This really touched my heart deeply for a couple of reasons. Firstly, I, along with my twin brother, thought I was the only one my age practicing my faith. Secondly, I thought I had seen it all, as far as Church activity went, but this was an entirely new experience of Church. I realised there were other youth practicing their faith, even more fervently and with greater love and passion than I was. It was in that experience that I encountered the living and real God in the person of Christ. It was in this personal encounter with Christ that I had a re-invigoration into the faith, as it had become very distant and extremely lukewarm. This experience changed me and as I continued meeting these lively Catholics I grew in my faith and love of Jesus and his Church. I also still hold onto a strong devotion and relationship with Our Lady, who continues to bring me closer to Jesus and the vocation he has put into my heart and life. If I could point to what an ideal parish looks like I would have to point to [-] parish, [-] in [-], Australia, which is led by Fr. [-]. It is one of the very small handful of parishes I believe that is fervently and radically living its identity of evangelisation and call to mission in [-], Australia and this is largely because Fr. [-] empowers the recognised leaders in the parish to use their talents and strengths to build the kingdom of God in that community and the wider communities. Praise God! It is parishes like this that give me hope for the future of our Church in Australia, as a young person and as a possibly future shepherd.

I'm sure my experience of the Church is no different to most you hear: i.e.

- the [-] family always sit in the second row so don't steal their seats;
- the 6.00pm Mass are trouble makers;

- Mrs [-] always brings the chocolate cake for morning tea so don't compete with her—you can bring a sultana cake instead (don't care if you don't like sultanas);
- [-] only likes the Old Testament so she gets to do the first reading every week;
- [-] likes to prepare so he can't do the prayers;
- [C] does the rosters so you have to be nice to her or else you won't get any of the good readings;
- [C] also needs to make sure Easter, Christmas and other important Masses are done properly so she'll make the sacrifice and do the readings herself;
- We might get a disease if we finish off the wine after communion so let's throw it down the sink instead;
- We might be arrested for drunk-driving if we finish off the wine after communion—sink's looking good again;
- That interfering sacristan won't let us throw the wine down the sink—let's complain about him and get a new one;
- Father doesn't really know what he's doing so just humour him and carry on regardless;
- Father's accent is too strong—let's start a petition and get a proper priest;
- Father wants us to fill in all these stupid forms—let's forget about them and hope he does too;
- that new person in the parish office wants the liturgical ministers to do mandatory training—clearly she doesn't mean us, we've been doing it for years and know exactly what we're doing. Let's go out for coffee instead;
- that new family don't look like 'proper' Catholics—let's ignore them and hope they go away
- and so on and so on.

And despite all this the Church continues to muddle along. Can the Plenary Council shake things up, professionalise the organization from the ground up and make the [C]s of the Church accountable? Probably not but if it doesn't make a serious attempt to put in place structures which address the issues big and small which have created the culture of exclusion and lack of accountability which exists across the Church, how much longer will it continue to muddle through? By making the [C]s accountable, the priests become accountable and so on up the line until the Church is actively engaged and accountable as a whole to communities in which it operates. Ignoring the little things, makes it easier to ignore the big ones. Experiences of and in the Church should be positive, not a litany of complaints. It's time to make a difference by not only listening but acting.

Growing up, I attended Church weekly and felt part of a community that was like an extension of my family. I was a member of family groups, youth groups and social justice initiatives in my Church. The youth of today are not getting this opportunity because of the belief that the Church does not stand up for the marginalised anymore.

I grew up in a Church that had lost its identity and was confused about who it was (or at least that's what it seemed to me). Catholics do not know what they believe, they do not practice what they believe, and they do not know what it means to be a Catholic. Fortunately I have had numerous experiences of faith in the Church through those communities that hold fast to their identity and unashamedly proclaim their Catholicity. I believe that the Church will continue to shrink, as the point of no return has been passed. This does not mean, however, that the Church

cannot flourish in a future age, but the groundwork will need to be laid now for that growth; groundwork which incorporates the entire history and tradition of the Church.

Confessionals need to have children not alone with priests. With the separate stall type confessionals there needs to be another adult outside the confessional to make sure the child is not treated wrongly.

I converted to a Catholic around the time I married in 1980 ... since then our family spent every Sunday attending Mass and I was heavily involved in the music ministry for the last 30 years. Then things fell apart when my brother-in-law advised he was sexually abused as a child by a Catholic priest in [-]. This priest, [-], was convicted and jailed and died in jail. My brother-in-law was subsequently asked to be a key witness in the cover-up of this abuse by Archbishop [-]. After attending some of the court hearing I decided to immerse myself in books on the topic and have had my eyes opened to the extent of the abuse within the Church ... but even more concerning is there is widespread knowledge secretly hidden in the Church records of who has been committing this abuse. Information about the perpetrators is known by priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and the pope ... how can any organisation regain our trust after that?! ... I feel the Church has taken us all for fools ... taken me from my community of friends ... and now we finally hear of the conviction of George Pell ... where will it end?????

Over these last few years, I have come to realise that what I am, and who I am today, is only because of God's grace. Going back in time to my mid to late teens, I literally "walked away from God." I pretended to go to Mass, by choosing a different time from the rest of my family. This went on for over five years, during which time I did some pretty awful stuff; some of which included stealing from my school mates, and later on from my work mates. The foul language I used at work; the pornographic magazines; and the compulsive lying, which, at one time, landed me in court, as I had lied to the police. Throughout much of this time [-] and I were having, what I would call, an "on and off" relationship. But eventually, our relationship started to get serious. About the time of our engagement, I decided that I had better do something about my relationship with God, because I knew, that if I died, I would go to Hell. My next step was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made. I had to go to Confession; which is now called "the sacrament of Reconciliation". Not being at all humble, I decided to take a thirty-minute train ride, and go incognito to [-] Church in the middle of the city of [-]. As I went into the Church, I had this huge amount of fear and inner turmoil; which I later understood to be Satan, trying his hardest to get me not to go. I truly thank God for His grace to overcome those thoughts, which enabled me to go inside and sit down, and wait for my turn. When it was my time, I went into this old dark stained wooden box, knelt down on the kneeler in front of the equally dark grille and curtain, and when the curtain was pulled back, I just started "Bless me Father for I have sinned. It is about five or six years since my last good confession..." When we had finished, and before the elderly priest closed the curtain, his parting words to me were "Welcome back." I tell you, words never sounded so sweet. After my prayers of penance, I came out from the Church a new man—born again. The heavy load of sin, like a huge rock that I had been carrying on my back was gone, I felt set free and made clean. I felt lighter and could stand up straight, because the load on my back was gone. It was truly an amazing feeling. [-] and I were then married in November 1967, and although our first child [-] was miscarried, we currently have four children and 6

<p>grandchildren. Now, many years later I thank God for my Mum, my Dad, and my Catholic upbringing, and I have never returned to that way of life. Amen.</p>
<p>As a young Catholic and teacher within the Catholic system, I have experienced more in terms of my faith development through my employment and dealings with colleagues than with some of those associated with the school parish and my local parish. As a teacher I am aware that times are changing and feel positive that the way in which Religion is taught within schools has changed from when I was a child—that is the stuff of nightmares! Students today are taught to ask questions, to make connections and show their understanding of faith in positive ways.</p>
<p>I have been educated in Catholic schools, attend Mass at a Catholic parish and am studying a Master of Educational Leadership (Catholic Perspective). All of these experiences have helped shape who I am as a Catholic.</p>
<p>Travelling overseas with a priest and sitting on the floor in a circle in our small group every morning to celebrate Mass. The priest was on our level, one of us, as Jesus would have been. This is how the Church should be.</p>
<p>I am a cradle Catholic, ageing now but thank God still in good health and sound mind. My faith formation began in the home and has been my light, guide and joy, through good times and rough. A myriad stories come easily to mind to testify my positive attitude re BELONGING to the Christian family. Maturity has also given me a deep respect and appreciation for what I've gleaned from OTHER faith pathways. I'd like to mention just one particular type of story that bothers me on a negative note just now and gained from listening to lay people and their reactions, hopes and dreams. For instance, over the past couple of years, H. and P., grandparents, have attended the sacramental moments of three grandchildren, and have a couple more coming up 2019. (I too was present on one occasion). Feedback from the grandparents illustrated, in one instant admiration of the officiating priest's approach, in the other two, much disappointment. In fact the grandfather's reaction was hotly critical which saddened me. No word of praise, encouragement or thanks was given in the homily to either parents present or their beautiful children, etc. only a slightly sarcastic remark regarding absenteeism from Mass throughout the year... This approach I have also witnessed on Christmas and Easter occasions—would a word of encouragement be more likely to warm the hearts of congregation present and engender the kind of “were not our hearts burning within us?” reaction, maybe a desire to return to Mass more regularly? I relate this story because I know the calibre of people like H. and P. also deeply committed Catholics, who are becoming disillusioned by the negative approach to things spiritual and the sometimes seemingly materialistic or judgmental remarks that turn good people away. Encouragement, understanding of circumstances and genuine warm welcome would make a big difference.</p>
<p>I know the Church do a lot good in welfare and I'm proud this.</p>
<p>Eucharist, charismatic prayer, rosary and proper faith formation through thriving communities have shaped me. Sisters of the Immaculata, [-] [-].</p>
<p>The majority of the priests whom I encountered as a young boy and right throughout my adulthood have been faith filled men who made deepening my faith a great journey. Sadly my most recent encounter with a priest of the Catholic School where I am the principal in [-], has</p>

seen my faith the clerical leadership decline significantly due to the priest being a power hungry, controller of school matters. This has made the relationship between the school and the parish very tense. Sadly the priest is unaccountable and untouchable. There is no feedback or review process for priests and there needs to be.

Undeserved good fortunate to be born of Catholic parents and being blessed to have the benefit of the sacramental life of the Church thereafter. Equally fortunate to have experienced an excellent education both secularly and spiritually by the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers. Blessed with a loving faithful wife and mother of our children, the benefit of ongoing renewal through the Cursillo Movement and various retreats including the MSC 'Life's Healing Journey'.

- 1) Reading the books of Kevin Treston, Who Do You Say I Am?, The Christ Story in the Cosmic Context and The Wind Blows Where it Chooses,
- 2) Reading the many books of Fr Richard Rohr OFM, author of Divine Dance and Universal Christ and listening to his words of wisdom in <https://cac.org/fr-richards-statement-on-the-new-revelations-of-priestly-abuse-and-coverup-2018-08-20/>,
- 3) The De La Salle Brothers who educated me from Yr 5 to Yr 12,
- 4) Reading the works of Cynthia Bourgeault and the late Fr Thomas Keating,
- 5) Experiencing and practicing Christian Meditation as introduced by Fr Laurence Freeman OSB and teaching it to secondary school students,
- 6) Walking the Labyrinth as taught by Lauren Artress and teaching it to secondary school students.

Thanks be to God for the blessings I have received in my life. I met my wife in our church community and now we have two beautiful kids. My life is guided by Jesus and mother Mary. I also worship the lord by playing drums in a very cool band ([band name]).

This is just me talking now, not the group, although they also stated cases where members of their family no longer go to Mass or Communion because of broken marriages and being divorced and marrying again or having partners. I have a nephew whose marriage fell through and he was divorced. He continues to go to Mass but does not receive communion. He has now had a partner for 17 years but will not get an annulment. I have spoken with him about an annulment, which from speaking with priests and other people I believe would be a good solution but he won't go that way. He's a good person, a charitable one, who attends Mass each week. We need to find a way to welcome people such as my nephew back to active participation in the Church. I have other relations who have just stopped being part of the Church because of broken marriages—they felt they just couldn't live up to what the Church required of them. Surely what the Church states about divorce and remarriage is the ideal? Surely good Christians who are living a good life and who can't attain those rigid heights of what is expected can be included in our Church? The Church's rules are an ideal and we fall every day and are forgiven and given another chance, why can't people who have been hurt by broken relationships, or done the braking but now have moved on and regret their actions, be welcomed and forgiven and given another chance to live in the way Christ meant us to, in a good relationship with Christ, the Church, and the Father?

I am a family who filled me with love of God and faith in action. I love my faith. I love Jesus and pray constantly that I will fulfil his mission for me on this earth. I am passionate about

involvement in ministries that reach out to care for others and play an active role in such within my parish. Cooking in a soup kitchen and bringing a meal cooked with love to the table to feed God's homeless and bringing that family atmosphere to the many who have never experienced it is something my husband and I love doing each week. I would love to see the archdiocese open its own soup kitchen and show God's love to those who need to feel it, and there are many. It would be one step closer of showing that we are a Church that truly cares about people. We should have soup kitchens in all Archdioceses in Australia, and the Archbishop and bishops and priests should be rostered on like everyone else. After all Jesus ate with sinners and beggars. I guess my point is, to have a future, our Church and clergy in Australia and throughout the world need to be more like Jesus, in a practical way and serve the people as Jesus did, get in there where people need to feel love and show them God's love, then things may start to change.

A harsh 'fire and brimstone' Monsignor during my school years who left me with the understanding of a cold, revengeful God. Then many years later a priest who used the words love and God in the same sentence and opened my eyes for the very first time to a kind, loving and encouraging God which completely turned my faith life around.

Re-education of myself through attending the RCIA group with my partner belief that we who were baptised as Catholics, were given little understanding about Catholicism, and by fear, physical and emotional pain were "told" that what Catholicism was about. Very poor role models in terms of clergy (alcoholics, gamblers and who would just turn up at our place on a Sunday between morning and evening Masses, to get a free feed and get drunk). Catholic Nuns who used physical abuse in boarding schools and day students in their teaching. Fear of mortal sin, if we didn't turn up to Mass, or were punished by the school Principal on Monday morning. Fear of Hell—Fire and Brimstone if we even made venial sins. The fact that we were born with sin—as a child that is hard to understand.

I was personally an ignorant Catholic young woman when I encountered God. It is true that God has a specific time and place for you to meet Him but if it hadn't been for the dedicated people from my parish that demonstrated their love for me expecting nothing in return my encounter with God wouldn't have been easy. And it is because of the hard work of these dedicated lay people at my church that I continue to grow in my faith and also work hard for others, especially the young, to know the true meaning of Church, God, Jesus, Love.

I am so grateful that the Church has attracted enough men and women to the priesthood and religious life that almost everywhere I go in Australia I am able to hear Mass and attend the sacraments.

I have found that my participation in the Charismatic Catholic Renewal has stirred my quest for a deeper faith and restored my joy and love of God. This has led to a deep longing to further know God and I have undertaken the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. I believe that embracing all methods of praise and worshipping God are valuable and necessary for a holistic and genuine knowledge and love of God and his creation.

Sharing of faith in Bible study and renewal of the Spirit prayer groups has been so helpful in helping me to grow and deepen my faith.

My experience with MenAlive in [-] reignited my faith in God and brought me back to Church. MenAlive is a non-institutionalised organisation aimed at renewing a man's faith in God, and reigniting the future of the Church. The events and opportunities offered by MenAlive are engaging, relevant, valuable, exciting, thought provoking and life changing. If the Church's value proposition and mission was more aligned with organisations like MenAlive, its future would be more promising.

Up until 6 years ago I knew very little about the Bible. In the past 6 years in reading the Bible my relationship with God and my hope for the future has blossomed.

I entered a religious order aged 17 and belonged for 6 years until I realised that the Second Vatican Council wasn't to have a significant impact in my lifetime. In 1968, as a Spirituality Novice, I was sexually abused by the chaplain of St [-] hospital, [-]. I didn't tell anyone until 1989 at a reunion of our novitiate group. I am recovered, finally. I was warned by my psychologist, an Emeritus Professor at [-], not to go near the Tribunal because I wasn't strong enough to manage their adversarial processes. Thank God, I have been guided by some genuinely holy priests since 1983. I now celebrate Mass on Channel 10, Mass for you at Home. I am grateful beyond measure for these Masses. My Religious Sisters are my closest friends and support when life's troubles overwhelm me. We all need to dig deep inside our souls and minds to discern what God is asking of us in this opportunity for real reform so that we shed our shells, be vulnerable and exposed, be humble, be wise, be brave, be Christ. And forgive, even though we struggle to understand.

The Church is most in need of evangelisation as a focus. Many Protestant, Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches have lured people away from the Catholic Church. In my experience, I was 14 and at a moment where my friends were leaving the Church. Had I not had a team provide catechesis and call me to conversion, in all likelihood, I may have left too. This would be (and is) generational because if one person leaves then their children and children's children are unlikely to know Christ and be Witness to his saving love. Spreading the good news of the death and resurrection of Jesus is the mission of the Church. The high school I went to always had a nun and brothers but they didn't engage. They need to be visible and participating in the life of the school, defending the faith. A Religious Education teacher had a publically known divorce and married another teacher of the same school which caused a scandal. I was raised and educated by nuns. We were taught to pray and prayed the Rosary, received the sacraments regularly. Their love and care for our faith was evident and stayed with me all my life.

The strong sense of community plus the obvious sincerity of our priest are key issues for me.

My faith is very important to me. The constant bad news in the media is very disheartening. I feel like we cannot trust the hierarchy to do the right thing. I am a teacher at a Catholic school and have seen faith dwindle. Over the last 30 years. Religion has lost the faith component and now is more like history or geography. I believe God should be the centre of our lives and especially our schools. He holds me in the palm of his hand in good times and bad. He is the first person I turn to in need. I would love the youth of today to experience the faith and love of God my generation had. My kids say they believe in God but not the Catholic Church because it is bad at its core. This makes me very sad. I want you to tell us how we can help?

Australia always makes you feel inclusive with others due to its multicultural nature, so does the Catholic Church that has made me grow my strong faith and spiritual life.

In 2014 I had the opportunity to travel with my Catholic community up North to [-] to help with a workshop telling the good news. This workshop was received by the Tokelau community. What has shaped me forever was that despite the limitation and little faith I had that the message was going to be well received and understood, there was a Massive surprise for me when in the morning of the first day, the testimonies where that impressive, that I could only close my eyes and contemplate how great is our lord.

Sisters of St Joseph—at the forefront of change, Franciscans—inclusive and connected to the people.

A negative story was ... when I wanted to get my son baptised before he was one year of age, and the priest went mad at me and made me feel really upset. Even when I was crying the priest still didn't console me. A Catholic priest would not marry my husband and I on a Sunday and my husband was not Catholic. The guilt around not going to church every week.

I am 64 yrs old. I was married at the age of 16 and have had 2 beautiful children in that marriage. After 14 yrs of marriage I found myself not happy in that relationship and was divorced and since remarried by a great friend who is a Uniting Church minister. This great friend also married my daughter who always attended a Catholic school but was denied to marry in our Church because her then husband who was not a Catholic had been divorced I think that is very wrong. Now because I have been divorced but have been remarried now for 31 yrs am not allowed to go to communion I have been asked if I considered an annulment which I strongly believe is a money making thing and I consider that not right for my children that I had in that marriage. For most of my life I have been a church-goer most of the time I consider myself a reasonably good person bearing in mind no one is perfect I have been an age care nurse since I was 15 yrs old and have worked at Holy Spirit Home for 37 yrs alone and last year have retired because of health issues from all my years of hard heavy work I consider myself a very caring person. I have been denied being able to be a communion minister because of my divorce where I would have been very suitable to minister communion to the elderly and sick. I have to say I feel a bit uneasy that I do go to communion at Mass because I don't think our loving God would punish me for my mistakes that we all make. I have a friend who was a priest but left and married who also is denied to have communion. This man attends Mass every Sunday. How wrong is that? My question also is would we be having problems in our Church to this degree if our priests were allowed to marry. We need big changes in our Church if we are going to survive in the future especially with all the sex abuse problems we are having. I understand that it's not just our priests involved but omg we have a major embarrassment and huge problem we need to fix ASAP if we are to regain respect and survive in the future. We need to punish and get rid of all the priests that are found to be guilty of their sex crimes we need a major clean up and more caring rules to survive the future.

In our parish a group of Syriac Catholics set up their mission. No one was consulted or advised this was to happen. They just arrived. This happened over a year ago and there has been no attempt to advise the parish about this decision or even introduce their priest to the rest of the

community. No one begrudges sharing our parish but people feel excluded and made to feel like we do not matter. No wonder people are leaving.

My wife was abused by a Christian brother on her 21st birthday, 1st year teaching; the harshness of the nuns and the brothers (everyone knew of sexual dalliances). A friend was sexually abused by nuns when put into a home in [-]; there was a huge deal of fear within the Church, and that was instilled in children, not the religion of God; my wife's family hid from the locum for their PP on a Sunday, who just wanted to drink and eat at their house, until he was drunk, and said the evening Mass. The PP drank, smoked and gambled, and visited them in their home most Sundays of the year. He was uneducated, went to the seminary as an "easy choice" after Year 10, was angry, would yell at the altar boys during Mass if the bells weren't rung to his satisfaction. He was not a good role model, but it was accepted as the norm. I only recently converted to Catholicism, knowing all of this, watching the drunkenness of the clergy and staff at Catholic schools, when we were playing footy against them. I have been going to Mass with my second wife for 25 years, but didn't understand all of the standing ups and sitting downs, the scriptures, the strong symbolism, the muttering of the Rosary. It wasn't until I meet one decent MARRIED priest, whom I spoke to about my wife being in trouble with the police, through no fault of her own. She was going to step down as a Eucharistic minister and aged care volunteer, as a result of her interaction with the police, considered herself not worthy to continue her work for the Church. My discussion with this wonderful man, who was understanding and compassionate, and encouraged my wife to continue her duties. This man changed my life, and I love attending Mass, understanding the intricacies of the Catholic religion. Thank you Father [-].

My parish is involved with [-] Community Alliance with Unions, other Christian Denominations, other religions and community groups. Others have come to know us as people with similar desires for the common good. We have worked together rather than reinventing the wheel. We have supported each other and made the world a better place together.

I was born into a family with a mother who had an amazing Catholic Faith, and a father who was a convert (a very good one at that!) I went to boarding school aged 8years where my faith was enhanced by one nun in particular. At home we said the rosary every night, Mass on Sundays etc. I remember saying to this special Nun one day, Sister, 'you amaze me, you are so non-judgemental', she replied, "it is not my job to be judgemental, it is my job to prepare people for judgement"!!

I was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer in 2017 and today I am completely healed. Because of the prayer of so many and our faith in the intercession of our Blessed Mother to her Son Jesus Christ, I am alive and healthy physically and on the way to a richer spiritual life. God always has and always will move mountains through our prayers.

All members of the small Christian community who discussed the topics are immigrants. Some of us were supported by religious sisters when we arrived to Australia. We are very grateful for their support.

In my younger years yes the Church certainly shaped me I would say for the better. Of course as you grow and mature you then sort out what you believe and what you don't. I feel I have a strong faith but it is between myself and God. I don't believe in going to Confession, I speak with Him regarding that, and feel most comfortable about that. I sit beside an elderly lady in Mass who

never went to communion, we spoke about it not long ago and it was because she had been separated or divorced years and years ago. We had a chat I felt I gave her positive advice and empathy that she obviously needed. I felt appalled that for years she had never felt that she could speak to a priest about it. I said do you really think God is sitting in judgement of you? I don't think so!!!! About 6 weeks later she followed me up to communion. I was elated.

Grew up with biblical stories shoved down throat and told never to question. Now same stories are said to be not real. Mocked for believing them. Now it's 'the message behind the story' we are told to believe. Now I doubt everything, especially traditional faiths like Catholicism. I have my own faith—no longer strong—more a questioning 'is it real?' type.

Response 1: I feel the Church has lost its way. When people think about Catholicism, they automatically think about the Church's hierarchy rather than the faith itself. Given this, the hierarchical structure of the Church needs to change in order to be more inclusive of all members of the Church. Only by doing this can the Church thrive in Australia into the future. When we consider this in the context of loving thy neighbour, it is evident that the Church has been perceived to exclude some based on their gender, sexuality and disadvantage. Women, homosexuals and the socially marginalised do not seem to play an important role due to their gender, condition or who they love. In a social context where women are becoming more influential, I feel it is imperative that this is reflected in the Church. In a society that seems to be accepting of homosexuals, the Church could become more welcoming as well. In a society in which inequality is so prevalent, the inclusion of those feeling marginalised would only enrich the Church. The Church must be more tolerant and inclusive of difference in order to become more progressive. As a young female, I am passionate about gender equality. I understand that women and men have different experiences, but it is for this reason that I think women could contribute so much to the processes and decisions of the Church. A Church more inclusive of women will itself become more inclusive of others.

Response 2: The Catholic Church, given its current structures, is not accessible to everyone. Women are underrepresented in the hierarchy of the Church, making them feel less included and less valued within the Church. This is particularly apparent in the exclusion of women from the priesthood. To address some of these issues, the Church could adopt more democratic structures and processes that actively encourage the participation of marginalised groups, especially women. Consideration could also be given to how women may be more significantly involved in liturgy and the celebration of Mass. If there were to be less emphasis on male hierarchical structures (Pope, cardinals, bishops and priest) and more on real faith in Jesus that lies at the heart of Catholicism, many believers would feel more a part of the Church.

Response 3: We should reform the Church's structure so that it is more democratic and inclusive. This is essential if the Church wishes to remain relevant and integral to the lives of Australians. Currently, the power vested in the Church's hierarchy means that the voices of the broader Church—lay Catholics—are neglected. By being more open to the experiences and witness of the laity, the Church can become more inclusive, more diverse and more culturally relevant. Women especially should have a larger voice and greater role in the Church. The Plenary Council is a great start but this needs to be a regular event. I can only hope that this current process achieves deep reform.

Since my first memories of Sunday school, Mary has been a powerful inspiration to me. My prayers are always directed to her to intercede with God on my behalf. We already have her most powerful prayer, the rosary, as our aid. Jesus' mother, our Mother, brings us together in community as a family, where love, compassion and mercy is lived out. I find her a powerful role model as I try to live up to her expectations.

I have been having good experiences at my Parrish. It has deepened my faith and there are some lovely priests there.

I relocated my family from our comfortable home in [-] to [-] when I got a job there. We left our family back home and the transition was challenging, especially coming from a rural environment [overseas] to a city in Australia. We got a house in the suburb of [-], about half an hour north of [-]. I was flying out to work and would be away for 8 days in the [-] and return for 6 days. I left my family on their own and it was a struggle to adjust into the new community, especially when we did not know anybody there. But the first thought that came was to locate the nearest Catholic Church. Fortunately, the parish was just a few minutes' drive from our residence. It was like reuniting with family when we first entered the church. We slowly got to meet people, the children attended Sunday schools. This helped them receive their Baptism and First Holy communion. We met more friends and began to enjoy the life there. But life changed when I got a job in the [-] Islands so we had to leave for [-]. We settled in [-] and found [-] parish in the [-] area. We adapted well into the [-] parish. The rest of the children got baptized and received Holy Communion there. The parish priest (Fr [-]) is an excellent pastor who worked hard to expand Church infrastructure and grew a strong spiritual community. He also encouraged active participation in the Church which saw the growth of a youth group, choir groups and Sunday school. So the Church has been part of my family from the start, having been raised in a missionary family where my father was a catechist and my mum a devout Catholic. My own family of seven kids with their mother are strong Catholics. My wife is now commissioned Sunday school teacher at our parish. The best moments we had as a family was when the parish priest celebrated our special days thanking God for the achievements and blessings. Two of those moments were when the family got their Australian Citizenship and when two of our older children graduated from university. We made special offerings thanking the Lord for the blessings. While living here, we also support our church in [-]. Prior to coming over, we established an outstation where we led the community to build a church and established a school. In the future, I see my children grow in the Church and hopefully take up special roles in the Church. At the same time, continue to support my local church to grow. In the long run, the feedback I've given here is noted among others and actioned, especially the growth of the Church through a good Catholic family raised through the Catholic Education system.

As a young mother with a big family I, and my husband and older children, went through a harrowing ordeal of being close to losing our young baby with whooping cough—this was over 45 years ago—but I know it was not only the wonderful staff at the [Catholic] hospital but the Prayers and support of our great parish Community, some people we barely knew who came to the house to pray with us, who pulled him through and helped him to grow to adulthood. I have been married for more than 60 years now and there have been other crises but the Church and various

priests through the ages have helped us over the rough spots and kept us the loving couple we are today. We are truly blessed. Where we might be without our faith I dread to think.

I was a member of Antioch, a Catholic youth group, during my late teens and the group were pillar of support when I needed it most. They helped me through some of the hardest times in my life. I was also blessed to meet my husband there. The group was closed down by the parish priest when he heard a rumour of two members being intimate at an event. While I was not present at the event several members who were there assured me nothing happened and what started off a funny joke turned into the rumour the priest heard. The priest didn't ask the parties involved or even the parent couples and pastoral support workers who attended. All we received was a sternly worded message about sins of the flesh. The lack of trust and respect shown to us all in closing down the group was appalling. My brother and younger sisters missed out on the fellowship of such a community. My sisters struggled to meet other like-minded people and both have gone on to find atheist husbands. My brother was lucky enough to meet an Apostolic Christian at work and marry her.

People with all their great freedom make right choices to be connected with the Church community even though there are so many discouraging things happen. They are very open to the realities and generous in sharing what they got.

I have belonged to the Catholic Church all my life, and I love being a part of the Church. Part of my story begins after Vatican II. The priest and Nuns in the parish where we lived, offered us Programs to help educate us in the Faith, and bring us up to date, as far as possible, on what the Documents of the Council were teaching us. We were encouraged to buy and read the Bible. We were given very good and clear instruction on the three Rites of Penance/ Reconciliation. It was an exciting and inspiring time in my life. We moved towns and in 1979 was asked to do a Cursillo Weekend, which I did, and have been involved ever since. It has been a continued learning and prayerful experience, with like-minded people, helping each other to learn and grow in our Spiritual life. The parish priest where we live now is a Scripture Scholar, so his Homilies are always good and very informative, and I am happy to be in this very welcoming Community of [-], [-].

I came to Christ when I had a vivid vision of the evil in the world and myself. When I turned away from evil, I saw Christ. I began learning about the Catholic Church and the teachings and was received into the Church a few years ago. However I joined a Church whose body has largely turned from what has always been taught. I encourage the participants in the council to consider seriously how far we have gone wrong and to turn to Christ.

For me the most significant experience of the Gospel message came as a young woman who was opened to the liberation of Vatican Council II—taught by well-educated lecturers and teachers in the 1960s. Sadly much of this in-depth and adult learning was highly criticised and subsequently diminished by what could be described as the fear that people would lose an understanding of the Gospel that focused more on comfort than on courage and challenge.

I grew up in a country town and had a wonderful Catholic upbringing in a Catholic Primary school with weekly full school sung Mass and daily Mass available to all. Our Diocese had a thriving liturgy commission and the schools and parishes were united entities in supporting Catholicism in our communities. I attended a Catholic Boys secondary school where the whole sang the faith

morning and evening, with full sung Mass on Sunday morning and benediction on Sunday night. Since attending school, I studied at university, worked in the Law and retrained as a teacher. I then worked in the State School system. Twenty years ago, I took a job in an order owned Catholic school and was simply appalled that the teaching and singing of the faith had collapsed. It has taken many years to get the school at which I work to reach the minimum standard of worship that was simply assumed in my childhood. The only remnants of true teaching of the faith could now be characterised as institutionalised secular humanistic acts of charity carried out by students at the direction of teachers. While these acts of charity are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in our world, many of the students simply don't know that this is the case. Many schools are managing to differentiate themselves as Catholic through good works, but they are failing to connect the good works with the reason that those good works are carried out—out of gratitude to a loving God. Accordingly, they leave school without the fundamentally important belief that they are created by a God who loves them unconditionally. This must change.

I am part of a wonderful parish, yet my real understanding of parish comes from my workplace—a Catholic secondary school. I teach religion, and believe me, there is a special door into heaven for those who teach Year 9 religion, especially on a Friday afternoon! I love being Catholic—it is what I do and who I am. I tell my students repeatedly: Jesus is a doing word, a verb. I am old, nearing retirement, and approaching that stage in my life where I can give back more time to parish life. I have never stopped learning and I hope that my last tussle with cancer doesn't stop me from completing my master's degree in theology.

Reintroduce the third right reconciliation.

I became a Catholic in my mid-twenties (1970s). I have been very fortunate in finding a very welcoming place in the heart of the Church. I have never doubted God's call to me to join the Catholic Church. However, I am under no illusions that this is the case for all Catholics, 'cradle' or otherwise. My husband and I have three adult daughters who received all the appropriate sacraments and attended Catholic schools. They, like the vast majority of their Catholic peers, [do] not participate in the life of the Church. They say they do not believe in God and the Church is not relevant to them. "We are the Church" and our constant cry must be "God, help us!" I am truly humbled by the lives and contributions of all who have gone before us and built the Australian Church. My prayer for all of us involved in the Plenary Council and all faithful to the Church today is: "Help us all to hear what needs to be heard, To understand what we hear, And to do what needs to be done." (Fr Michael Casey OCSO "Grace: On the Journey to God" [-]).

There are many elderly parishioners who are on their own at home or in residential retirement homes that need visits from the clergy. They need to be invited for events like Healing Mass, morning teas, bingo, song-a-longs etc. Some of them are sick or infirm and don't see a priest from one month to another, sometimes not even a Communion Minister. They would like the chance to go to Confession and also have a chat with the priest. I have been in various parishes and find that bishop's visits are few and far between, even for Confirmation. Priests are tied down with parish administration or are reluctant to hand over duties to other parishioners. They are afraid of losing their 'power' or of receiving advice from others. Priests and clergy need above all to be "Men of the People". In Australia too, we need more Australian priests who understand the Australian Culture and Language and be more 'down to earth'. I hope this Plenary Council will be a success

and will not be weighed down by bishops and clergy. It needs to have delegates in equal numbers—Clergy and Laity; Men and Women, if we are to have a reasonable and successful outcome. We need also to advertise it more in the Dioceses and parishes as many parishioners really [know] nothing about it, apart from a notice in the newsletters (in small print). I suggest more time be given to input from around the country, and also special prayers at all Masses.

I had very good experiences with our parish priest in [-], nth [-] as a child—Fr [-] was an Irish priest who had moved to Australia as a young man. He was a kind and intelligent man. Some of the priests I have encountered as an adult have not inspired me and in fact have made me question their calling to the priesthood in their lack of compassion and understanding of family life and the pressures of making a marriage work. I feel in priests could marry and have families they would be able to comprehend and have so much greater understanding of family life and be able to relate more meaningfully with the members of the Church.

As a 53yo I have grown up with Catholic lite, and a human focused worship. I have faith, through the grace of God, largely despite the Church—and "Catholic" education system in Australia. I recognise the sincerity of many priests and thank them for their gift of their lives, but few if any have preached the truth this generation needs to hear.

In my mid-forties and fifties, I was struggling with temptations and sins against chastity and purity. The person who brought me back to right relationship with God was my confessor who was a very understanding, humble and holy priest. Every time after confessing the same sins, he forgave me with kind words of compassion, encouragement and wise sayings, briefly said with love and simplicity. From time to time, he even asked me to bless him, despite being sinful and arrogant as I am. That's the power of grace, of a God who is humble, loves and forgives unconditionally through a human agent. Only God can give us this grace of conversion through the reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation in faith, trust and humility.

Our Bible study group came together at the encouragement of myself, [-], who is making this submission on behalf of the group. The group is made up of: 3 couples ([-] and [-], [-] and [-] and [-] and [-]). [-] a divorced mum, Dr [-] whose husband stays at home to babysit the children (a girl and twin boys). [-] whose wife stays at home to babysit teenage children. [-] was brought up as a devout Catholic. When his mum was pregnant with him (first child for a new immigrant in the '50's) she would pray 15 decades of the rosary daily for the sanctity of the baby, or live long enough for baptism and be taken to heaven. [-] renounced her Catholic faith almost 3 years ago and is now what I would describe as a fundamentalist protestant. She was unmoved by some of the distinctly Catholic views in the Bible study (Jeff Cavins' Bible Timeline) [-] is a bricklayer, and it took 20 years of accompanying his wife to church to convert him. [-] is a nurse. K and D lead RCIA classes. [-] is a devout Catholic from Ecuador. [-] was not Catholic when they married and became Catholic on the strength of F's faith. [-]'s husband fell instantly in love with her when they first met. They had a daughter and the relationship went sour, instigated by the husband. [-] has deep understandings of certain passages in the Bible. [-] and family are regular Church-goers. [-] felt a tug when asked to join the group and hasn't looked back. She had a number of aha moments which have strengthened her faith and made her realize how little she knew about her faith. [-] is a devout, regular Church going Catholic. He is a policemen. He had some aha moments during the Bible study as well. [-] had an inspiration to start the group after

<p>attending a Bible study group on the south side of [-], and after his wife left the Church. The catch cry of the group is "Know why you believe what you believe".</p>
<p>I became a Catholic just before I was married and think it was the best thing I ever did. Although my husband who is Catholic and children do not attend Mass. I would be lost without my faith in God and the Church.</p>
<p>It's a bit sad that I am one of the youngest at the Church I attend. There will come a time when it won't exist—because no one will be there. The winds of change are very strong and I fear the deafness of old men is stronger.</p>
<p>Through the eyes of a child I fell in love with the Roman Catholic Church and "Through the eyes of a Woman" my eyes have been opened, all I can see is a sea of red "zucchetti" not a leader of woman amongst them. Men with costumes strut the stage. Our Mother the Church is a woman. Does anyone feel the way I feel. When I was told that "All women are Eve!" the Church left me alone and desolate. Eve is a fearful word. Genesis was written by a man. Would the world be surprised if there was love not hate through a woman's eyes? Could they see what I see the things upon my "slate" Just a different angle looking up instead of down? Just a different meaning. Turn it around. THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES Could we say "Lord I am a shepherd, not a sheep. I have my children's souls within my keep". THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES Woman are not perfect neither is the male Have our relationships began to fail? THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES The devil is a liar. He is alive and well It is said that he is condemned to fail. THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES Man is he all perfect? Woman has her pride! Would they ask what does she think? Questions change in style! THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES Should we resurrect ourselves? For it has been said That Christ rose from the dead? Was Christ perfect or was he human too? Did he have to rethink things and see it through? It could not have been easy with some friends he had for they were human too! Don't judge me or God will judge you! THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES Perhaps I got my anger out But will it do? Is that all there is to life? Will someone read my writing and understand That I have a love for man! Will he love me too? THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES To love not hate! To have a little circle, That says "peace" not "war" If you are peaceful in yourself Your world will head itself So that Women's children can "live". THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES A CELTIC CROSS I SOUGHT MY GOD MY GOD I COULDN'T SEE I SOUGHT MY SOUL MY SOUL DELUDED ME I SOUGHT MY BROTHER AND I FOUND ALL THREE.</p>
<p>Daily devotion to God's Word has helped me to hear His personal message for me. Unless we change individually, it is difficult for us to change as a community.</p>
<p>I used to call myself a lapsed Catholic. Now I call myself a hypocrite. I regularly attend Mass, I am heavily involved in my parish, my children attend Catholic schools, and yet I am a hypocrite. I am embarrassed to tell my friends the truth about how often I attend Mass and my involvement in the parish. I feel like my faith and my religion are sometimes very separate. I want this to change. I stopped attending Mass when I was a teenager. In my early twenties I was working at the RPA hospital in [-] when I x-rayed a Catholic priest. He noticed my behaviour and asked me if I was Catholic. I said yes, brought up that way, but unfortunately lapsed. He asked why, when I told him he said: "how do you expect anything to change if people like you don't stay within the Church?" This interaction started a change within me, and on settling in [-] in 2005 I started to think about</p>

attending Mass and being involved in a parish community again. But I still feel like a hypocrite, because my core beliefs are that God loves us all, the way we are, who we love, what we do, everything. I believe that the Catholic Church needs to say sorry for all its past sins, make amends for them and settle all court matters without more battles and appeals. The Catholic Church needs to step out of the science debates, the marriage debates, bring in equality of the sexes within the Church, and embrace the world for the way it is today. The Catholic Church needs to go back to the basics, our faith; our spirituality; our love. I think when that happens, people will flock back to Mass, and to the Church in droves.

I struggle with the rigid attitudes within the Church and the inequitable treatment of Church members. The Church has been governed by a patriarchy that has not adapted to change. It is its very system of canonical rules and regulations that has led to so many of the problems the Church faces in the community.

I am one of the few of my age who has maintained my Catholic faith. I was raised a Catholic by two wonderful parents and went to Catholic schools and was well educated. I was an Altar Boy for many years, taught by Nuns, priests, Friars and lay people. I was never molested, singled out or harmed but acknowledge that others of my age may not have been so fortunate and my heart breaks for them. I have always been taught to stand up for myself and for what I believe is right. I still live by the motto of "seek and ye shall find" and not to take everything presented to me as being fact. It has allowed me to grow to be the person I am now. I am not that much different to the 16 year version of myself. I trust in my God and firmly believe that I have been protected and guided throughout my life. This April, I will have been happily married to my beautiful wife for 25 years. This could be seen as being close to a miracle in today's society. I am the only one of four children that practices my faith, although I believe that my siblings have not lost faith but live on the periphery and as a result have had more struggles in life than I have. I have fond memories of my Catholic upbringing, the times when my family was close, the Christmas gatherings and special times spent with Catholic friends. My Catholic faith was fastened to me for eternity on the day my father died. I was 500km away from him but knew the exact minute he died as it felt as if he had come to see me one last time to say goodbye. On the night before his funeral our family gathered with friends at the funeral parlour to pray as he lay in his coffin in front of us. We prayed the Rosary like we did as young kids. It was my turn to recite the prayers and I was shaking and beginning to cry. At that moment I had the most wonderful experience as absolute peace overwhelmed me from head to toe. In an instant I was relaxed and peaceful and somehow received a simple subliminal message which basically said—"I'm all right, you'll be alright, continue on the right path". From that moment I have held no fear of death and know that my father moved onto his eternal resting place. I believe my faith allowed me to have this experience. I still find great joy in using my gifts, skills and abilities to help others. Life often throws up challenges and dead ends as we strive for human progress, yet we continue to yearn for spiritual progress. My faith is the basis for all I do. I may get ridiculed for being a practicing Catholic but that does not deter me from acknowledging my faith in front of those who wish to cast stones. I hope that I still have more capacity in the years to come to continue to play my part in building a stronger, loving, caring, compassionate and inclusive Church that is respected and trusted in the broader community.

It has taken me a lot of effort/time/study finding priest, religious, and resources that taught the Truth, that explained why I am Catholic and why I do what I do as a Catholic. I'm one of the fortunate. My children attended Catholic schools were the male principle and APRE dressed as nuns at a school concert, apparently with approval from our local PP. The Ecumenical movement within Australia appears to be all about holding hands and saying [we are] all the same. Where is the Truth in Australia? Who is training our seminarians? Who is training our teachers? No-one is training us and/or our children ... I am Eternally grateful that I have older siblings who have helped me in my journey of faith, especially when I was prone to despair about 'never being "good" enough'. God has been very, very good to me. But I have not been able to trust that all books and/or other good sold in Cathedral, or parish, stores are Truth which created a lot of those problems that my siblings helped me with. We have so much as Catholics—why not share it with Catholics and non-Catholics alike?

I've been a practising Catholic since my birth and today see no earthly reason why I should change.

I've had faith in the teachings of Jesus Christ from early childhood. I've been married for nearly fifty years. I have three children and four grandchildren. I just keep playing my small part in my parish and will no doubt do so until the end of my earthly time. After that? Who knows what God has in store for me? What I do know as I pray the Our Father each day that Christ came to bring us a full earthly life as well. We can only enjoy this by doing His will each and every day regardless of what those around us think should be done.

I just continue you to live my life enjoying a strong relationship with the incarnate God by regular attendance to parish life.

Despite all the recent goings on around the globe, I stand with the current Pope in boldly but humbly acknowledging our dependence on our incarnate God.

The Church has and still plays an enormously positive role in my life. However I am aware that so many of my family and friends find the Church irrelevant to and out of touch with their lives. They are good people who live good lives but cannot relate to an organisation where the executive is dominated by men, where people are excluded based on their sexuality and where those who take Holy Orders are forbidden to love in the same way other members of the Church do.

Brought up in the Catholic tradition, educated in Catholic schools and university, teaching at the coal-face of Catholic education today... struggling with faith questions....

Although I have taught in Catholic schools since 1972, and still am a very good teacher using my skills now in parish work, I basically am not 'living for my faith'. I am committed but I have life outside the Church as well. My life is balanced. In the late 80's I was in a far north regional city, pregnant with my first child and not married to the father. I went to church one Sunday and a woman spoke about the need for catechists in schools (back in the days when it was all separated by faith). I had given up teaching and left [-] but my teaching is my vocation. I spoke to the woman after Mass and said I hated the idea of wasting my skills when they were in need. She was thrilled. She was a MSS nun. I worked with her for a couple of years and she changed my faith life.

I went back to Church and became more involved. She was one of my life-changers. Sadly she left the service and now practically scorns the Church—very sad. Strange that as my faith grew, hers depleted.

I was lucky enough to have been born into a very strong, Catholic family and my parents, although not overly strict, placed a very strong ethic responsibility on my shoulders. Mum was a late convert (I think about 14 years of age) but she brought me and my four siblings up to love honour our God, parents and neighbours. I never cease to thank God for this.

I would like to share my story of faith and my experience of the Church because I think it demonstrates the difference that evangelisation and having the mystery of Christ proclaimed to a person through a Catholic school education can make to a person's life. In my case it was the difference between a Godless void of emptiness and a joy-filled life of faith, hope and love. Every day that I live I become more grateful that God blessed me with the gift of the Catholic faith which would not have been possible without my attendance at St. [-] School from 1943 to 1952. My story titled '[name]'s Alleluia' is attached.

My faith has been shaped by being immersed in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for about 40 years. There I have received the most fantastic teachings based on the Bible. There I have learnt how to really worship God, not just sing some songs. There I have experienced Prayer Ministry and as a result, have been able to use this give to help others. There I have learnt about and experienced true Fellowship with my brothers and sisters. There I have experienced a closer and closer relationship with my God. Jesus has become my closest friend. I am who I am because of this experience. I would not be the person I am today without this wonderful faith journey. My desire would be that we ALL could have this amazing faith journey. So many people in the Catholic Church are "afraid" of the Charismatic Renewal. I believe that is because they are afraid of the unknown. They do not understand it properly and they do not hear about it from the Hierarchy of the Church. "How will they know, if they are not taught" scripture tells us? The Popes have always recognised it officially as being very beneficial and an important part of the Church worldwide. But will our bishops in Australia come out and give it their official support? No!! Are they afraid also? If they gave public endorsement to the Charismatic Renewal there would be a "wildfire of enthusiasm spread through the Church", a transformation like they have never seen before. Not in a whimsical way. Not in a hysterical way. But in a way that people would REALLY CONNECT in a deep way with Church, the Bible, the sacraments, every facet of the Church. Isn't this what the Church needs? Some movements and solidarities in the Church seem to focus on one aspect of spirituality. The Charismatic Renewal does not have one focus but focuses on the central tenants of the Church. If there is a main focus, it would be on the FULLNES THAT GOD WANTS FOR US. The Church teaches about many things, but sometimes falls short of this FULLNESS. I desire that ALL in the Church could experience this FULLNES OF GOD. So, come on bishops of Australia, follow the lead of the last 3 Popes and publically endorse that the Charismatic Renewal that started 50 years ago has been the GREATEST INFLUENCE FOR RENEWAL THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS EXPERIENCED. That is what Pope Francis said Pentecost 2018 when people worldwide gather in Rome at the Pope's invitation to celebrate this wonderful achievement. Are the bishops sticking their head in the sand? Can't they see the good fruit that this renewal has borne? The Bible says DO NOT BE AFRAID. Surely 50 years is long enough to see that this is not some "fly by night" fad,

but something truly brought about by the Holy Spirit of God. Let's not deny any longer this true movement of God because to do so would be to deny God Himself and let's NONE OF US do that. Maybe that is why the Church is in the state it is in now, because the Church has denied the very gift God has given us to bring the Church ALIVE.

I have shared about my experience of faith in a previous submission I have made. But I would like to add one thing. I know that many parents my age lament the fact that their children are no longer involved in the Church. That is a common trend throughout Australia. The greatest exception to that trend that I have seen is in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I have seen so many children and grandchildren embracing the faith of their parents and grandparents when exposed to the Charismatic Renewal in an ongoing way, not just an ad hoc way. As well as what I have observed in other families, I would like to share about my own family. We have been involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for about 40 years and our 3 children were brought up in that atmosphere. They are all married now and are each involved in their own parishes along with their husbands and children. We don't take all the credit for that, except that we exposed them to an environment where they were able to embrace the faith themselves and eventually they were able to own their faith and pass it on to their children. There were good programmes in this environment during the teenage years and that really helped. One daughter is married to a man who is a Permanent Deacon in the Catholic Church. One daughter is high school teacher in a Catholic school and has gone on to get her Masters in Theology. Another daughter and her husband are involved in running the Baptism programme in the parish. Her husband plays keyboard and sings at Mass. Their eldest son who is almost 15 absolutely loves Altar serving, loves being in the choir and is one of the main organisers when we have a Youth Mass. So this is the fruit of the Charismatic Renewal WHICH SO MANY PRIESTS ARE AFRAID OF!!!! They need to get their head out of the sand and look at the fruit that this Renewal has brought in every part of Australia where it has been growing over the years. THIS IS THE TRUE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH. THIS IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH. There are many Covenant Communities and the fruit has also resulted in organisations like the Ignite Conference, NET Ministries, Men Alive and others, but so many priests will still not recommend the catholic charismatic renewal. They are afraid and they hide and sometimes bad mouth something they do not understand. How much longer will the bishops also stay silent about this. Will they wait until our churches are totally empty before endorsing this gift that God has given to the church from the beginning, but especially in the last 50 years. 3 popes have endorsed it—isn't that enough credibility. Is the Church serious about wanting to continue, is it happy to let it die out. People can experience this in the Pentecostal Church and many Catholics have left to join them because THEY DO NOT KNOW THAT THIS IS AVAILABLE IN OUR OWN CHURCH. HOW RIDICULOUS! WHEN WILL THE CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS BLINDNESS and FAILURE TO LEAD ITS PEOPLE RESPONSIBLY?????

I have been Blessed to have been involved groups within the Catholic Church that have greatly formed my relationship with God. Firstly through [-]. This was a great Lay lead movement which encouraged study of the Bible and discussion groups. It also promoted action by way of following the motto "What would Jesus do" in a particular situation. We had the opportunity to "own" our

faith and stand up for it, rather than a "jug to mug" approach. Sure we always had our Chaplain in our parish as well as our overall Chaplain. These were a good influence on us and became our guides and our friends. A great balance of Clergy and Laity. This was in the 60's and 70's. I feel that the Church has gone backwards in that regard, as we had that great model back then and don't see it in our parishes to that extent any more. Even to invite someone to a Journaling group, people are reluctant to come, because they ask "Will Father be there?" They have not experienced what we did in [-]. I have heard one Religious say that as they have gone to different parishes, most often the people who help in the most significant ways are people who have had a [-] background. In more than one place in the Bible we read "All Wisdom comes from God". But Wisdom is given to the Body of Christ, not just to the Clergy. A great imbalance has occurred, probably stemming from the fact that centuries ago the Clergy were educated and the Congregation were not. But that sure has changed now. The congregation have access to so many resources, both printed and online, that they can be very well informed on Church matters. If ever there was a time to correct this imbalance, NOW WOULD BE THAT TIME. This imbalance leads to people feeling disconnected to Church. They just "attend" and often feel that if they don't come, it won't matter because the priest will still say Mass whether they are there or not. There has to be greater connection and involvement by the Laity. Sure they can't say Mass, but their faith has to become alive, as I described above. Then, when that does, they can be encouraged to share that with others, in the form of evangelisation, and sharing these booklets with others. Probably the greatest thing that has happened in recent years has been running Alpha Courses. I am on a Team leading a course which is a great example of Laity being involved, as long as the priest does not stifle the Team being able to grow in taking responsibility. Alpha is a big time investment which not all people have. But the booklets I outlined above are one of the greatest ways for EMPOWERING THE LAITY as it takes such little effort but with the opportunity for such great growth in the Church. Anyone can give a booklet to another person. Evangelisation is a scary word in Catholic circles. But God gives us the Great Commission to spread His Word. It is not optional. So the booklet enables the congregation to do that and it can help to bring the Church alive, so I see it as a win/win situation, don't you?

We are young Catholics who grew up in the faith, and have been fortunate to experience encouragement and formation in our faith throughout our youth, university education and young adult life. This formation has come from supportive family environments, strong local Church communities, Catholic university groups, as well as priests and strong Catholic friends. We understand that young Catholics, especially when they leave home, need huge amounts of encouragement and engagement in the faith community in order to grow in faith, and resist secular and cultural norms that are incompatible with Church teachings.

I grew up a Catholic, regularly attending Mass every week. Dutifully attending Mass like most people. I guess I attended Mass more out of habit than anything. Some years ago though my relationship with God changed. He became real to me, not someone I had to fear at the end of my life, but someone I could interact with and share my life with. Someone who loves me. This made me much more active in my faith taking an active role in the life of the Church.

I was given a good grounding in Catholic beliefs, principles and values through early Catholic education. I have been able to draw on these gifts through good times and bad. I must say though,

some of what the nuns taught was based on fear and threat of everlasting damnation. For example, we were told that to miss Mass on Sunday was a mortal sin! Axe murderer/miss Mass on Sunday, seriously! I actually believed this myth until I was about 38 years old. Despite being told these porkies, I attend Mass regularly after seeking a more meaningful, active relationship with Jesus.

Through my faith, spiritual development and experiences in the Church, I have developed a deep relationship with God—one that does not depend on things going right or wrong in structural ways or human failures of those in power. I have suffered exclusion and been angry with the power the Church thought it had over me. God loves and does not judge. We need to change the language of all of our rituals and become more real in celebrating together. The language of the Mass, for example is dated, it's old-fashioned and it makes out that the people in the congregation are less than the celebrant. Jesus was not like this. The priests need to wear simpler, symbolic clothing as they represent us at the altar.

I had 12 years of Catholic schooling and have taught in Catholic high schools for around 8 years out of my 11 total and I've travelled through parts of Europe as a pilgrim but I feel there are significant holes in my knowledge of the faith despite around a 95% attendance at regular Masses. It seems that the younger generations have numerous gaping holes in their knowledge of the faith. Many of the people I come across regularly display ignorance and/or reticence to actually pray and it seems to be regarded as weird that we actually choose to attend Masses. Our own teenage daughters who have attended a Catholic high school and been taken regularly to Mass and have experienced family and other prayer at home haven't 'caught the fire' and resist involvement without their friends (whose families don't practice). The only 'raised Catholic' peers I've come to know who attend Mass regularly actually married non-Catholics, as did I. The Catholic culture that existed in my extended family whilst I was growing up hasn't been replicated despite most of my 19 cousins attending Catholic schools throughout.

One of the ladies in our groups said: I came to the Church after terrible divorce. The Church saved me in many ways—offered so much more honest advice / truth much more than any psychologist could do The Catholic Church for me has been open and accepting of brokenness—marriage, health, mental health. Teaches us to be Christians to help to reach out to those people. The Holy Spirit brought me to Church through the neocatechumenal way, and helped me rebuild my life—through relationships with people around me and to make me whole again Gave me teachings to pass onto others / to love them.

Catholic religion was chosen for me by my parents. I went to a Catholic school and it was a must to attend Church. It was like a 'must do'. It was not until I was an adult that things changed for me. I got involved in a church that brought Jesus back to me and its meaning back of gathering together with others. This church made Mass and the message of God interesting and it was easy to get involved on the level you were comfortable with. It was wonderful to have the celebration of Mass enjoyable and not just fire and brimstone. There was no talk about the financial concerns of the Church. It was wonderful and I reflect back on those years. Now I am in a church that has a priest who is old and cannot be understood because he comes from another country and his

accent is strong. There is no motivation to join into Mass. It is sterile. The Church needs to bring back life within its structure.

I was a 'cradle' Catholic, raised and educated a Catholic. As an adult I drifted away from the Church. At 39 years of age, my husband (Uniting Church) and I were supported through the stillbirth of our daughter by our local Catholic community. Through this, we were drawn into the community and became part of it. This was the start of my faith journey even though I wasn't aware of it at the time. I was gradually drawn closer to God through a series of events (such as Pray 2010) until I had an intense experience of the Holy Spirit during a Catholics 'Come Alive' Seminar in 2011. And I was changed. I was more joy filled and peaceful. More aware of God at a personal level; able to pray; was reading, understanding and proclaiming Scripture; manifesting spiritual gifts; much richer faith life. And so the journey continues as He takes me deeper and deeper to places I never would have even considered or thought possible.

I've been a baptised Catholic for 68 years. I am grateful that in the 1960s the foundations of my faith were laid by the grace of God received in a good family and Catholic schools. Once going to University I knew I needed more to live a Christian life so I turned to reading about Jesus in the Gospel. God was faithful to my search and through the witness and ministry of friends from other Christian traditions I was led to the new Pentecost that Pope John XXIII had us praying for in school. This Baptism of the Holy Spirit brought me into an intimate, experiential, personal relationship with Jesus with its inevitable call to mission. I spent 2 years in the old [-] Seminary completing Philosophy but feeling alienated from any sense of community. I realised that I was not equipped to live the solitary life of a priest. I have followed my Christian vocation becoming a foundation member of [-] Community in [-], completing a Social Work degree, working as a Social Worker for [-] Government, marrying and raising 4 children. Now in retirement from secular employment I have time to pray and meditate daily on the Scriptures and with the help of other Spirit-filled Christians learning to evangelise others with the Good News demonstrated by the working of His healing power. This has convinced me that the Church where I daily experience the glory of the Mass can reach the world by living again as the Church of Acts—the Acts of the Holy Spirit.

Journey of Faith by [-] In 1983, when I married my Catholic girlfriend, [-], I was still a practicing Taoist and had no idea what the Lord had in store for me. All throughout our early years of courtship and marriage, [-] never tried to convert me. Sure, I did follow her to Church for Sunday Masses but it was more to accompany her rather than to listen to the word of God. Often during those times, I would either be hanging around outside the Church or inside reading magazines. Out of curiosity, once in a while, I would ask her what the priest was doing and about the significance of the actions. I even did a correspondence course which provided me with more information about the Catholic faith and practices. However, the desire to become a Christian was not there. In March 1995, I attended a Life in the Spirit Seminar with [-]. I went along purely out of curiosity. During the seminar, I found myself weeping for no apparent reason. I later learned that this was quite normal because the Lord was with us in an awesome way and we just cannot contain our joy when He is with us. During the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, many people Rested in the Spirit, and I said to myself that I would not let this happen to me as I was still sceptical then. However, when I was prayed over, I immediately rested in the Spirit. I was conscious and tried to

get up immediately but felt my legs were numb and I could not get up. [-] came over to me and told me to lie down and relax and only get up when my legs would allow it. After several minutes, I did manage to get up and felt peace within myself. After that I experienced a great thirst for reading the Bible. I also knew deep within me that Jesus was for real. In May 1995, I enrolled in the RCIA programme and became baptised as a Catholic the following Easter. During the RCIA journey, I reconciled my Taoist beliefs with my new faith and now believe that there is only one True God and that is the Holy Trinity, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. I know that God will always be with me, as he has always been, even though I never realised it before. The Lord has blessed my whole family greatly and we have all grown spiritually thanks to God. As to what lies ahead for my family and I, only the Lord knows. We have put our trust in Him and pray that we will be able to do His Will.

Sharing my experience of faith through Catholic Charismatic Renewal Thirty-five years ago I was experiencing a very difficult and challenging time, due to sickness. I was suffering physically, emotionally and spiritually. This was a dark time in my life. I came to Mass feeling empty and alone, and returned home feeling the same way. There was an empty void that nothing could fill. I attended a Life in the Spirit Seminar in a neighbouring parish. At the end of this Seminar, I received a release of the Holy Spirit through prayer for Baptism in the Spirit. During this time, I had a personal encounter with Jesus as Lord and Saviour by experiencing God's love and acceptance, just as I was, and this changed my whole life! A weekly Prayer Group formed and I wanted to be part of it. Members frequently laid hands on me and prayed healing prayer and gradually my health improved. Through prayer and teaching, I had begun a journey of faith and conversion. I was grateful for the gift of my life and I chose to live it! My faith gradually deepened and I was more able to enter into Mass by listening to the Word and receiving Eucharist. After Communion, the parish priest would sometimes lead us into silence and pray a short prayer, by welcoming Jesus into our hearts and asking Him to reveal Himself to us in our need. If the priest didn't pray, then I was disappointed, as I had not yet learnt to pray for myself. I am now living a completely different life through service by serving the Church through Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I have found God and I have discovered who I am as a child of God. I am grateful to Him and to the charismatic Catholics who have prayed for me along the way. I am fulfilled by living a life of purpose, trusting that I am entering God's plan through me by serving the Church, locally here in [-], in this State of [-] and also nationally. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share my faith experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit through Catholic Charismatic Renewal. [-].

I was part of a Church youth group that was well supported. My experience was positive and I would probably not be a practicing Catholic today without it. I find however that in the current decade not enough focus and support to youth and young adult ministry is being given unless a person are involved with the charismatic movement or with some Catholic high schools. I would like to see more Church resources focused on youth.

My parents were married by Father [-]. He was the parish priest of [-], the Church that my parents and I with my brother attended. One day, he disappeared and we later found out that he was charged and sentenced to time in prison for indiscretions. That was the day that the Church lost me. I would have been a teenager and I said to my parents that I could not be a member of an organisation where an individual was preaching but leading another life. It will take a lot for me to

be able to trust the Church as well as priests because of the actions of so many priests. The Church needs to rebuild trust and make the teachings of the Church relevant to younger generations because without it, there will be no Church. Younger generations like me will find and attend churches that have meaning and relevance to us. In recently attended church with my parents for Christmas. The average age of parishioners would have been 75. 90% of the congregation were old and there were a lack of young families present. The Church needs to engage with young people to understand what they want and need not old men and women with grey hair who don't understand what the wants and needs of young people are.

I grew up in a small Christian community whose focus was less on rituals and traditions and more on actively following the radical teachings of Jesus Christ in love for humanity, especially the oppressed and marginalised. I grew up with a prejudice against the Catholic Church as sexist, exclusionary, oppressive, controlling, and more concerned with appearances of holiness than with actually helping people come to a relationship with God and Jesus. I married a cradle Catholic and told the priest marrying us that I was a practicing non-Catholic Christian. Our four children are baptised Catholic and attend a Catholic school. I have become heavily involved in our local Catholic community because of the welcoming inclusive culture of our parish. Despite the differences in social values I have to those traditionally preached by the Catholic Church, the love and acceptance of the parish community have become a very important part of my life and mental, social and emotional well-being. Last year I participated in an Alpha course within the parish and this year I have commenced an RCIA program to be baptised and confirmed into the Catholic Church. I have suffered with mental health problems, including depression and anxiety and a huge part of my journey of healing has been the love, acceptance and support of friends within the parish community. I wish to be part of the change I want to see happen in the Church. I want to be involved in my parish as a full and active member, and help others to find the unconditional love and acceptance I have found there. Because we are the faces of God, and it is through the love and acceptance we receive from human people that we come to know the overwhelming unconditional love of God.

[-] Church governance is dominated by, as expected, a male elitist clergy and when lay people are involved they are from an elite privilege class, often donors and on committees and advisory groups through shoulder taps not through open transparent discernment and merit based open processes.

My encounter with God was the calmness and peace I had when going in for a major operation in my early 20's. I had many people praying for me. Even with this it took me a while to return and practice my faith regularly. When I did the local parish priest invited my now wife and I to get involved. The parish had some dedicated catechesis which helped build our knowledge of the Church. My wife and I are now doing our best to pass our faith and knowledge onto our 3 young children.

I have been involved in numerous RCIA programs and every year but one some absolute Church evil has blown up—I do not know how to explain such evil humbug hypocrisy and total scandal to candidates.

My earliest memories of going to Church were at [-] Church in [-]. I have fond memories of the stained glass windows and the vision of the high altar at the back of the Church. Looking back on it now I found it rather strange that this beautiful piece of architecture was largely ignored. Even as an adult the thought of the old altar and stained glass windows heightens my mind and soul to God. My parents, uncles and aunts all got married in [-]. When they got photos taken it was always in front of the high altar, not the altar used in the service. My wife and I baptised our oldest child at [-] also had photos with our son and the family in front of the old altar. I cannot help but wonder why these were abandoned. The most joyous faith memories I have are my wedding ceremony at [a Catholic church] in [-] and the baptisms of my two sons at [-] and [-]. These memories are of the beginning of things, the beginning of my marriage and the beginning of the faith journey of my sons and my important role as a parent to my children and to guide my family according to the Truth of Christ and the Church's teachings. The most powerful faith memories I have of the Church have been those that have been most solemn and reverend. The Triduum services at [-] led by Father [-] were always very solemn, reverend and powerful in their reverence. The funerals of my grandparents were also very powerful, the culmination of a life of faith and devotion to God and Christ all eventually culminating in the Final Things: Death, Judgement, Hell and Heaven. These times always remind me to pray for them and to remind me of my ultimate destiny and to act accordingly lest I end up in the wrong place.

Despite numerous unpleasant experiences I have not wavered in my belief in God. It is humans who make 'rules'. I grew up in a Catholic family going to Catholic schools. When leaving school my faith stayed with me. I feel lost if I missed Mass I came back to weekly Mass because of music and singing—[-] Cathedral with Sr [-] and the Rock Band.

I'm a teacher and I had turned away from God and the Church for some time, due to personal tragedy. However, teaching in a Catholic school opened the doors and windows in my heart to God again. I see God in the children I teach daily. I wish the Church could connect with these children better.

The Church has underpinned my whole existence—school, family, career and will remain to do so, however, until there is a genuine change in hierarchy and involvement and power across genders and there is a reach out to young people at all levels, I fear the comfort I have gained from my faith will not transfer to my children.

I constantly question the importance and effectiveness of my role as a music teacher in the Catholic educational system. What makes a difference to me is when students affirm through their participation in music making that I am involved in their absolute reliance on what some have called "the only good thing about school". Students experience a death in the family, failing grades in school, unpleasant social experiences, and dysfunctional family settings—they all turn to music making to be at peace. Just maybe it is the Lord speaking to them through the music they create?

I grew up in an Irish Catholic parish on the [-] in a very devout and loving family who were very much part of the parish. Life was good in this community as I and my siblings were educated well in the Catholic schools, and with the faith of my parents, we were well grounded in our everyday faith and living. Unfortunately, children at that time were taught, and reinforced by Missions, that

many things were gravely sinful when in reality they weren't, thus causing anxiety. Sadly, this affected me, but thanks be to God, with education and maturity, I saw more clearly and now rejoice in accompanying people in their understanding and healing. I have been very blessed to have been a professed member of a Religious Congregation, professed now for 54 years, and over these years as a teacher in our Colleges in [-] and then in a Family Support Centre, as co-ordinator/counsellor/family worker for 12 years, where I ministered in a Church property with government funded, I came to understand the struggles and the noble lives of so many men, women and children. I see more clearly the reality of life and the wonder of community as together we seek God in all people, places and in all of creation. Of course, my spirituality has developed, and I realised the need to study Catholic Social Teaching, and to work with the other Religious and lay people of [-] in not only providing relief for poverty but in attempting to change structures—not as easy thing to do. This has deepened my reliance on the Spirit of God leading us to new life. I believe we are now at a time to allow the Spirit, through discernment by all, to take large steps to change the structure of the Church in the way Pope Francis is calling us.

I am a 75 year old male. I have been widowed for nearly 10 years. Except for Baptisms and Funerals I have not attended Mass for about 4 years. My wife and I were heavily involved in parish life: For about 5 years we organised and ran a youth group for Catholic youth attending State High schools. We were Passionist Family Group leaders as well as parish Readers and Eucharistic ministers.

I was baptised as a baby, brought up in a Catholic Home the eldest of 10 children. I went to a Catholic school, worked in [-] PNG as a lay missionary (with [-]) for 2 years and am still in touch today with several of my ex pupils who live in [-]. I again lived in PNG for 6 years in the 1980s with my husband and 2 children and taught Sunday School for 5 of those years and was involved in the Church in [-]. Also led a group preparing for confirmation when my son and daughter were confirmed at the Catholic Church in [-] when Fr [-] was PP. I am retired and live at [-] some distance from [-] parish [-] so can't get to Mass regularly. I do sometimes go to the city for Mass at [-] but it is too difficult in the summer. I subscribe to Take 2 with Jesus, CathNews, the Wollongong Diocese Lenten Program etc. but am unable to attend Mass regularly or receive Holy Communion. I am sure there are many people like me in the same position.

I am not a Catholic but I teach in a Catholic School and I see the benefits of music in the curriculum particularly in relation to the teaching of the gospel, academic results and the positive result in social behaviours.

I have met many priests on my journey through life. These men have been human with failings as all of us have but each one gave me guidance and challenged and encouraged me to develop my spiritual relationship with the loving majestic Being we call God. He is with us now as the Plenary Council will evaluate and consider how and where we will go as the Catholic Church in Australia. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to the question: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? I think the answer is to respect and love one another.

My life has been a journey of learning. There are key people in this. My mother and her problems with ignorant priests but then with compassionate ones. My Jesuit education which opened up a strong faith linked in with rationality and justice. The ability to discuss difficult issues concerning

<p>belief and sexual morality. Being able to meet and discuss issues of importance with fellow Christians. Being inspired by a few individuals of compassion and mercy.</p>
<p>We need to be preached to by parish priests and not be theologians who only quote chapter and verse.</p>
<p>So many people who experience our ministry express that this is their Church; and if it is their only experience of Church, we are very mindful to make it one that is an authentic expression of the true mission of the Church.</p>
<p>I was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph at [-] and then by the Sacred Heart priests at [-]. They (and my mother) made me strong in the Faith although I am somewhat weak in good works. As a result I do not think I am pious or prayerful but I have constant conversations with the Sacred Heart every day. I have learned to distinguish these from internal thoughts and pangs of conscience because I am unlikely to ask favours of myself and I am always asking favours of God. And I am amazed at how often God grants them.</p>
<p>As a member of a welcoming parish with a strong community, great music etc. I was happy for myself and family members to be involved. The parish priest was a positive role model.</p>
<p>St Paul "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (1 Corinthians 13). That is the way that people see the clergy now. I have been a Catholic and regular Churchgoer for 64 years. My reasons for still going to Mass include my relationship with God, my responsibility to my family and community to continue the faith and a desire to be part of the faith community that carries out so many good works in line with the words of Jesus. I can't remember any clergy that I had a close relationship with. Clergy have seemed more focused on rules, sin, money and control. All around me I see ordinary people doing God's work in teaching, healing, visiting, caring. Simple things like taking communion to the sick, checking up on the elderly neighbour. The love of Christ is there. I was in the Vatican about 3 years ago and there was a Mass being celebrated in a little chapel. As I went in, the small group opened up and a lady grabbed my hand and welcomed me in. The Mass was in a language that I didn't understand but I felt welcome, accepted and in the presence of Christ. That was the highlight of the Vatican and that to me is the Catholic Church and we need to make our Catholic Church more like that example. I know so many people that have left the Church wounded and hurt by clerical abuse of position and power. I have seen so many examples of where good people have been intimidated, humiliated and shut down by the priest with total power in his parish. Where is the love of Christ there? There is no doubt that being a priest is a difficult task. So many hats to wear, trying to be all things to all people, manage finances, grapple with the Church hierarchy, administer the sacraments and then find time to spend with his God and have some life for himself. We desperately need new systems of governance and management in our parishes where lay people share in the responsibilities of their parish while enabling the priest to work better at his tasks. I think that we are all called to a period of wilderness experience to reflect on our own actions, become open to the Spirit and begin to more closely follow the call of Jesus.</p>
<p>I grew up in a Catholic family and went to Catholic schools in the 1970s and 80s, in the post VCI era. I think my parents, who paid for a Catholic education, were defrauded by the Catholic education system as were not given the Catholic faith, our sacramental life was not fostered, and</p>

we were not helped to learn to pray nor to see our role as bringing others to the faith. We were effectively abandoned to the reigning culture with disastrous effects on our families and our faith. The last 50 years experiment is a failure. What we have now is little more than a social institution which has little supernatural outlook, little confidence in God and makes very little use of the means God has given us. The current Church succumbs easily to current trends and does not provide and nurture eternal truths in the faithful so that they are left defenceless against an increasingly hostile environment. So my overall experience is negative, with some notable exceptions. What does not surprise me is that so few Catholics go to Mass on a Sunday—what surprises me is that anyone goes to Mass on a Sunday, given the poor liturgy, the incipient preaching, and the lukewarmness of the clergy and laity involved in ministry. It is a sign of God's presence that anyone [still goes] to Mass because he sustains the Church despite us.

I'm very proud to be a Catholic. I was educated in Catholic schools. I've been in schools as a teacher, STIE and Guidance Counsellor for 43 years. I acknowledge that some things have gone wrong. But I've seen many more things go fantastically right.

Prophecy for the Australian Catholic Church [-] November 2018 John 2: 5 NKJV "His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."" Impressions: There is an invitation by the Holy Spirit that echo Mary's words to the servants at the wedding in Cana. There is an opportunity to discover how to hear the voice of the Lord as a community of faith, 2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". Part of what the Lord is calling for is a renewal of intimacy towards Him by parishioners and clergy, this will come as they learn the ancient patterns of gazing at the face of Christ through His word by the Spirit, Hebrews 12:2 NKJV 2 "looking unto Jesus, the [a]author and [b]finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." There is a fresh Season at hand of resetting our focus onto Christ. Psalm 104: 15A NKJV 15 "And wine that makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make his face shine.", There is a Time at hand of healing oil and wine poured out on the hearts of the Church. A willingness to look to Jesus as healer and the one who anoints you afresh for service. Psalm 110:3 New King James Version (NKJV) "3 Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth". Rising of lay champions from within her midst that will bring reformation of passion and love for Christ to return to the people. I see priests taking off their robes and not so much leaving the Catholic Church but rather positioning themselves as lay leaders who work in the Church without the constrictions of the priesthood that have inhibited them in the past. There will be a movement of prayer and petition rising from within the laity of the Church that will stand on behalf of fallen leaders and operate in substitutional repentance. The Church will return to places of social justice and mercy with a renewed passion and vigour as the love of Christ overwhelms her again by the Spirit.

I'm in a parish that is about to be amalgamated and with the increasing pressure on managing churches in various locations, properties, schools and hospital involvement, there is not enough time and energy to really engage with the community one-on-one.

I am seeking to become a Catholic by becoming a member of my parish. This is in light of the sense of faith and community/spirit that has been evident in my school. The response from the parish has been somewhat slow.

My faith was challenged as a young woman whose parents and baby son had all died before I was 20. The Lent after my son died, at a time when I was suicidal, I attended a Lenten Program where one topic was about thanking God for not only the good things in our lives but the bad things as well. I went home that night and thanked God for taking my son. It was the biggest lie I have ever told in my life, but I kept saying it until it was the truth. This was the watershed moment in my life of faith. Without it I don't believe I would be here, a woman 44 years later, mother to four others and grandmother of nine. I truly believe if we need to thank God for exposing the scandals and the hurt that they have given the victims, their families and Church members. It is a time of great shame, but it's time thank Him for this Cross and to ask for His forgiveness and use the experience to grow a more loving, inclusive and honest Church community.

Having experienced a "MenAlive" week end in our parish of St [-]/[-] ([-]/[-]), A group of about 45 men formed a group named Men Connect, with small groups of men meeting for coffee each week to discuss the readings for the forthcoming Sunday Liturgy (chat for 15 minutes, for 30 minutes each read and comment on readings message to individual). This has added a new dimension to being nurtured in the Word in Sunday's homily. Men also meet 5 times a year as a large group for breakfast we cook or evening Pizza and listen to guest speaker on a faith issue (max of 2 hours) and once a year for half a day with speaker on in-depth faith issue, always with prayer and hymns. This is good for men but what is there for women, surely they should have a similar opportunity to get together and develop on a regular basis. Like gender equality in selection for party political candidates, some things should be mandated.

I was brought up in a devout 1960s household. We went to all the major liturgical events in the church year as well as Sunday Mass and some weekdays. My sister and I sang in the choir, my mother played the organ, played for hundreds of weddings and funerals, taught piano at [-], was a catechist; we knew and loved the priests of our parish, they were our friends, always coming round for dinner, much fun etc. By the time I was ready to marry the man who has played a key role, very quietly, in my strong faith today, I was a slippery sort of Catholic, not observing much at all (I was 27). [-] and I had a pre-nuptial meeting with the priest who was to marry us, Fr [-] (another family friend!). He was very kind and suggested to me that though I mightn't be very attached to the Church at the moment, did I think I'd be open to coming back to it at some later stage perhaps? Without hesitation I said Yes. I surprised myself, and I've never forgotten that moment. About four years later it was Easter and we went with our two young children to the Good Friday ceremony full of holidaymakers at [-]. We stood up at the back, and I remember during the ceremony in the heat and chaos of the crowd, being struck by all I'd been missing out on by not having practised my faith. The feeling was very strong. I thank [-] for enabling that grace that later brought me back to God, as God's creature, slowly but surely.

For me, my experiences of faith don't come from my church but from the youth group at my parish. This is where my faith thrives and is nourished. This is why my main concern is for the

youth of the Catholic Church. If it weren't for the youth group and its members at my parish, I most likely wouldn't be attending. I believe it is the same for others in my Church.

My upbringing in a devoted family, a Catholic education, involvement in the YCW, and a very committed local parish community have all shaped my faith.

On arriving in [-] we went to 4 different Catholic Churches on the north side. Not one person stopped and welcomed us in. We joined the Anglicans, as our first visit was amazing—they would not let us go home without us coming to the hall for a cuppa and a chat after the service. We were fortunate to live in [-] and tried the [-] parish. Our Fr. [-] is the BEST priest we have ever known. We are truly blessed to have such an amazing pastor.

1. My parents who were non-practicing Catholics, mother spoke evil of the Church, made it hard for me to embrace and know God as I was being taught through the Catholic education.
2. I was taught to know and love the Church, nuns and priests through my parents' example. I have very joyous memories of Mass, singing and a house full of visiting clergy.
3. My ancestry was 7th generation Anglican. A drunken abusive Grandfather and Father who spent 6 years at war and said "there can't be a God with what I've seen".

I was baptised into the Catholic faith as an infant in the early 50s, and attended Catholic primary and secondary schools, mostly under the administration of the Christian Brothers. In this time the changes associated with the Second Vatican Council came into effect. I practised regular Sunday Mass-going and sacramental life, until such time I left home for tertiary education, when the practices diminished. In my early working life I felt the desire for a deepening of my spiritual life and more active involvement in parish life. Having participated in various renewal movements in my early 30s, I embarked on the journey to ordination as a priest. My knowledge, zeal and personal development expanded in the seminary years, for which I am ever-grateful. Priestly ministry commenced with zest and enthusiasm, but with the passage of not so many years, I felt I was "withering on the vine", with my perception that the majority of parishioners were sacramental Catholics, involved with Sunday Mass attendance, and support for schools, but little appetite for social justice, deepening knowledge of scripture and tradition, and little energy for change. Eventually I didn't want to perpetuate the image of priest as mainly sacramental provider, and yearned for the freedom of more open thought and lifestyle. I am a gay man (and have realised this from my teens). I decided to exercise my freedom in expression of sexuality, and to explore my theological concepts of God, Jesus, Church, and more, without the limitations of dogmatic pronouncements, etc. I'm still a work in progress, with God being ultimate goodness, and myself being a recipient and agent and promulgator of goodness. I have grave concerns for the human involvement in degradation of our God-given habitat. The pursuit of wealth, power, prestige, the excesses of greed, the growing disparity between haves and have-nots are complicit in the degradation. Ultra-nationalism, toxic sectarianism in many forms (including religious) are a potent mix for individuals, groups and nations to foment discord with a view to achieving their goals. If God be present and active in our world (and in our lives) we need to let God be God, and not constrained by our limitations in thought. We can learn from but not constrained by past revelation and experience, and become more attentive to the demands for goodness to hold priority. I find that the experience of Church, when considered as a people of God, can be life-giving, supportive, and offering a deep sense of belonging. However when the dynamic becomes

suppressed or ossified by excessive reliance on scripture, tradition and ecclesiastical structures, with a reluctance to be attentive to the lived and living experience of the people of God, then the potential for maximising the good is weakened or lost. My hope is that goodness and love will be the foremost and recognisable qualities for a Church of the future, and for the thriving of all human life on our precious planet.

When my family and I moved to our current residence, and the one before that, and went along to our local parish we were greeted by warm and welcoming parishioners and priests (both missionary priests). They made us feel at home and became a positive reinforcement for our faith as a family. This was particularly valuable as we had moved from out of state and, before that, from overseas. We are grateful for the two wonderful parishes we have been blessed to be a part of. In both New Zealand and Australia, my family has been blessed by links, friendship and spiritual direction from sisters belonging to the Sisters of St Joseph. These sisters have come into our lives at different times and provided spiritual wisdom and friendship which has strengthened our faith.

I see amazing movements everywhere within the Church. I actually believe the Church is growing and improving from the ground up ... not the other way around. When I was 13 years old a youth minister prayed for me ... now I'm 28 and my life has never been the same.

When I was four years of age unfortunately my father left home and I and my three brothers were brought up by my mother and grandmother. In my formative years I was blessed at various times to have contact with quite a number of clergy and laity in different parishes who fostered my development into adulthood and helped me to see the world through the very good works and actions of these people living God's word. Without them I would not be the person I am today and we as a Church need to foster these actions like never before. We cannot continue without strengthening our faith and love exponentially to build a Church for the future.

I am a cradle Catholic who strayed from my faith for many years during my 20's and 30's but always felt like it was there wanting me to return. After having children I have come back to the faith as I now understand more of the reasons behind the faith. I had an epiphany that has made me not only return to the Faith but serve the Church in ways that I was unaware of previously.

We have each participated in a weekend Marriage retreat run by Worldwide Marriage Encounter and our experience of this deeply spiritual weekend was to encounter the Holy Spirit and the way He works in our married lives. The encounter, in the name, only happens if we as a married couple, allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work through us. For us this happened in September 2009 at the [-] in [-] when through the Grace of God, what were once major obstacles in our growth as a married couple were dissolved and transformed before our very eyes. A miracle in itself.

I am a sexual abuse victim, I have experienced quite severe abuse but never in the Church. In fact, it was in the Church that I found those who loved, listened and accepted me. A priest and other young people in my youth group helped me to heal and I am now a leader in the Church. I would say thank you to the Church for that healing and to my God who found me in such a mess. However, I would also say be careful Church to remain humble and live the Gospel—stop all of

this sin. If you have a problem from Pope to teenager—work on sorting it out, don't transfer your damage to others.

My sister who was divorced by her husband, and being excluded from the Church by no fault of her own. Being made feel guilty for nothing she done!

My experience of faith in the Church has been shaped by firstly family, Mercy Sisters, Christian Brothers, Oblate priests, parish then [-] Community. I have experienced an encounter with Jesus outside the Catholic Church through the [-] movement of our Protestant brothers and sisters. They fostered a culture of talking about their relationship with Jesus. This set up a desire to encounter Jesus within my own Church. Thus I was drawn to [-] Community, with the twofold joy of faithfulness to the Catholic Church yet real, authentic, vibrant relevant, and attractive to the young. I would like to see our Church become more professional and mature in development of faith.

I and a couple of older parishioners thought we would like to do more to involve and include the youth. We tried several strategies. The general parish populous did the usual thing of saying "we need to bring back the youth." I felt that actually we need to go out to the youth, rather than do the same old things like recreating youth groups of the seventies, or trying to compete with the "Hillsong" style. In any case, we implemented a Sunday Night Mass that was for everyone but particularly inclusive of young and the young of heart. (this was in a parish that did not have a usual Sunday Mass, so it would not step on the toes of the 'usual ministers', musicians etc. who, without trying to be rude, said they wanted more young people and more musicians but actually scared away or alienated anyone who took them up on the offer and volunteered, which makes me think that sometimes we say things because we think we should but don't really mean them. That is, musicians who say "we need more people playing music at Mass, our present crew of musicians are not getting any younger and who will take over," but then time and time again when newer people put their hands up they quickly get 'shooed' off and leave, feeling not welcome. I used to think this odd, but I suspect the bemoaning of a shortage hid the fact that people were far too territorial and possessive of ministries that should be at the service of the worship community and not one's own needs). In any case, we instituted a Sunday night Mass, and we had some older parishioners who were very young in heart and keen to promote inclusion. But we quickly heard other voices complaining, saying, "why are you doing A SPECIAL MASS for youth, why don't they join in with the rest of the community?" This was a fair question. We tried the Sunday night model but it continued to get whinging from older parishioners and the numbers were dropping as we went along. So, we were not deterred, and we took the whingers at their word and decided to plan Masses whereby young families and young people could join in the regular Masses. We did not do anything too outlandish, but we did allow for a broader music style and involvement in ministry of younger, but appropriately trained ministers. However, the complaining did not stop then either. Now we heard "we don't like that music", "we don't know that music", "there were a whole lot of people sitting in MY seat." "I wish you would have told me this was going to be a family Mass, and I wouldn't have come." We persevered with this for a while but the complaints continued and the numbers dropped. I and the wonderful older but "young at heart" parishioners who were helping, felt very disillusioned. We realised that people don't always mean what they say or are not prepared to move out of their comfort zone to

achieve what they say. Also, can we PLEASE challenge 'welcome everyone to Mass' but "get out of MY seat." Unwelcoming and un-Christian!

I am currently being shaped by my position as an early years teacher in a Catholic school. I am struggling to teach scripture to 4 and 5 year olds. I am also struggling to help them to understand who/what God is when concepts are more easily understood by young children when they can be seen or touched. I am struggling because my own faith journey has taken a turn through my religious education university degree. I am confused about scriptures and how they relate to this modern day world.

My experience has been different to that which is so often portrayed in media. It is a place that makes mistakes but does its best with the people who turn up to do the job the best they can. Whenever discouraging news comes along I bail myself out by saying the Lord doesn't need us to be successful, just faithful.

I became a Catholic when I was 30, I moved to Australia when I was 40, where the Church seemed more open and liberated from the rules of the past. But then I found (perhaps through our own fault) that there was little personal or spiritual support for married couples and their children, there was a lack of teaching from the pulpit, and diluted, confused instruction about the Catholic faith for the children (who, like many, no longer practice). I am glad to be a Catholic, but I notice that Christians of other denominations seem to form better communities socially and spiritually, and take more personal responsibility for their church and its upkeep. It seems that Catholics have a tradition of letting the priest decide and take responsibility. In our daily life we are adults with tertiary education and family responsibilities—but in the Church we are children with primary school knowledge of our faith and little or no responsibility for the church. No wonder the Church is in a mess! The basic organisational structures within the Church need to be reviewed and changed if the Church in Australia (with its dearth of priests, aging congregations and waning attendance) is to survive into the future. Jesus did not say He would always be with the Church in Australia, especially one that has so often deserted Him. Thank you for allowing me to have my say—I hope it is helpful.

I have started to consider the Church in this following scenario..... I am reviewing our Australian Catholic Church as an organization of which I am considering joining to provide me with spiritual guidance, fortitude, healing and a sense of belonging with community inclusion and support. I see a Church that is led only by men, many elderly, who have never married, and thus have limited understanding or interest in family life, the day to day family struggles particularly for single parents, those caring for children with disabilities, or caring for elderly parents, or those with alcohol or drug problems. This organisation does not sponsor female contribution, and this is purely based on gender. Females appear to be most dominant in the volunteer caring and humanitarian roles offered by the organization, however, they cannot be appointed to higher ranking positions, because this is neither allowed or endorsed by the linked parent organization in Rome! Now the organization's CEO (Cardinal George Pell) has been convicted (but awaiting appeal) on child sexual abuse charges. Would I wish to be part of this organization—VERY UNLIKELY!!! However, this is my faith I'm discussing here—my link to dear God, my deep core love and belief which I value, cherish and is part of me. This is why I feel embarrassed, humiliated and

emotionally shattered that the head of my Church has let us down so badly. It has made me question myself, my belief and my wanting to be part of my Church community.

I am one of those who had struggled if God wants me to be single. In 1980 I came to Australia, started a marriage with the wrong foot being stupidly naive, discovering that my husband to be had severe alcohol addiction. Shock of my life that in [-], Mass was only once a month and had to travel on dangerous roads to get to the next town for Sunday Mass. I longed for the CCR, a nun visited me, the next PP was alcoholic too. My sister-in-law encouraged me to divorce him. I needed breathing space, we had to sell my dream 5 acre block when he lost his driver's license and moved down to [-]. Fr [-] advised me "do not think you are committing infidelity look for another man", after five years of misery I applied for a divorce and did not proceed with the Church wedding. I lost my house and moved down to [-]. CCR [-] became my anchor. I attended prayer meetings 3x a week and seminars in [-] as my family is there. I was so nourished in the CCR prayer group at [-] [-] and experienced an epiphany and resting in the Spirit in May 1987 when I was prayed over. I was also looked after by Pentecostal friends of friends. Witnessing attached. I am no stranger to life's difficulties and know how to have total dependence on God to help me through. Knowing about the annulment process made me understand what a valid marriage is. I had experienced one domestic violence and one long-term abusive 17 yr dating relationship with a practicing Catholic. The latter when I understood what love is given the emotional incest of the mother on him with interfering arrogant sisters who will not admit that they are arrogant racist that I was not invited for 17 years for Christmas. Unbeknownst I had depression setting in, after a hysterectomy in 1998, it was still lingering I resorted to Chinese naturopathy. To understand Catholicism in Australia I obtained a Graduate Diploma in Theology in 2006 from [-]. Then I was already recovering. I listened to the nuns counsel that they believe that marriage is my vocation because of my ministry. I met a friend on internet dating ten years ago. We started on good grounds until after probing, he has history of clergy abuse in Scotland. He does not want to go to psychotherapy and wrestling with God. I am still praying for a miracle from him to make a decision to follow Christ and get healed. A priest and friends advised me just to keep loving him. In 2012 I was bullied over the phone by an Aussie woman who I never met. I did not realise I was so angry with her that after a month I was having a hypomania attack. I reported to psychiatry at [-] after 3 months I believed I was over diagnosed, agreed to be confined for observations where I learned so much in 16 days. I took us some studies in Christian Counselling. I have been promoting spiritual theology and psychology in mental health awareness and prevention of domestic violence, how the Holy Spirit works on our psychology.

My patience has been tested—Fr [-], a very gentleman in the flock was going away and passed on my concern to Monsignor [-] which he mishandled instead of facilitating dialogue with [-] for him to take personal responsibility not the insurance company, passing on the buck. Through the Small Claims Court would be over and done with, given Fr [-] abused his authority and did not want to give me some compensation... Some parishioners stated that 'he came like a tsunami'. I lost my tools of trade, decor hire flower arrangements (conservative price then of \$5,000) stored at [-] Heritage Hall [-] when a new PP Fr [-] disposed them without any notice. Including a 2ft statue of the BVM and paraphernalia used in prayer meetings by the Italian community. M [-] also does not know, disposed to the rubbish tip!? I followed this through with Fr [-]. He was

evasive and even RTS the express post I sent when he was in [-]. I met the organist at [-] [-] personally and blurted "nobody likes him there" and added "yes, sounds like him, obsessive compulsive", that he was in [-]. Speaking of the devil, I approached him after a Mass at the Cathedral. He had the same language like MM, that it was closed topic not even a sorry. I blurted "you are so arrogant!". He was quiet. I still greeted him the following week when we were about to meet at the roadside near the Cathedral. I do not bear grudges, however I do not feel good until now when MM cohorts with a priest which I find a dirty modus operandi. My email was even blocked by MM. The way MM carried on I could say "he suffers from short man syndrome". Not even a word of comfort in his cold reply. I could always prove in all ways that the flowers were mine. Then secretary [-], the nuns and parishioners knew so. Fr [-], who MM does not like according to Fr [-], allowed me to have them stored at the Hall to generate income for me and the Hall too. I hurt my back and I had to apply for DSS. I would had felt better if during the encounter Fr [-] was sorry what happened and a set of Bible Commentaries would make me feel better. [-] then PC chairman, circulated a survey form if the article in the Synod were being implemented. I have to think of other source of income and I still feel upset every now and then as I still have to earn extra income during this retirement as I do not have superannuation and even extra savings. I could have sold the flower materials for some money. I am doing a hobby business Christian desktop publication and making heirloom design prayer beads. I am just managing with the back problem and other medical problems. I believe, with the state of mind of Fr [-], he would do better and the RCC would prosper more if he would be assigned as Chaplain for Music of the Archdiocese. Maybe for retired priests for a livelier community and proceeds for their upkeep and for more wisdom for [-].

SPEAKING UP, GETTING RID OF AUSTRALIAN ROYALTY ATTITUDE (?), What would Jesus do? If the hierarchy would comment: "This is not the place to talk about it", Archbishop [-] Instead of: Email me the details or make an appointment with me. When I approached him after the CC procession last year and asked him "you have to talk to Fr [-] as he does not believe in the Eucharistic Miracles". His reply: 'of course he does'. I have not followed through and now in this post. RECOGNISING THE AHAB / JEZEBEL SPIRIT When I asked Fr [-]'s hands-on on a concern which has become an issue and blown out of proportion. He was even paranoid calling me up again warning me not to call up and harass his secretary [-] was laughable. I have better things to do than to deal with prejudiced Aussies with pre-conceived ideas. He criticised me that 'it was not appropriate for me to approach the Archbishop after the Mass outside the sacristy (?) although he added 'there has to be some resolution on the matter'. Archbishop [-] commented that my concern about Fr [-] and his secretary [-] was overstated was insensitive. It is surprising how the relationship between a parish priest and his secretary could create negative bonding. The female Jezebel spirit and the Ahab male enabling each other. After three years of still haunting my memories while praying, I had to do something to the point of writing the Papal Nuncio as Archbishop [-] did not even reply or a word of comfort about my concern. The Dean Fr [-] assisted me of my ordeal and forwarded my letters to Fr [-] and the Archbishop. Still no word of comfort. The secretary, which should had retired to look after her mental health sounded like with symptoms of borderline paranoia, persecution complex with victim mentality. Having a transference, I strongly believe, of the situation when a parishioner, suffering from schizophrenia,

point a gun on her, a toy gun maybe. Why? She was not accommodating to him who has been calling her up. Over-acting, a damsel in distress waiting to be rescued by a knight in shining armour. Fr [-] over protecting her that they are going to get the police if I called up again. The Care and Concern minister although pleasant was not equipped with how to be a "fisher of (wo) man". TRULY LAUGHABLE. NO RECONCILIATION WAS DONE, PUTTING THINGS UNDER THE CARPET. I do not have much time to discuss in details.

My husband and I had already 5 children, when at the ripe old age of 46, I found out I was pregnant with baby no. 6, which was a bit of a surprise, but having lost my Mum that year from Cancer, as well as a brother in a vehicle accident, I felt happy that we would welcome a 'life' for a change). Anyway, because of my age etc. (higher risk preg.), I was referred to the [A Catholic hospital]. I recall at about 12 weeks' gestation, Drs wanted to do a 'nuchal translucency test' (a non-invasive scan that looks at the developing baby anatomically to determine the odds of baby having downs syndrome). This test would not be given, if results would not alter our decision. Because we could never hurt any baby of ours, we didn't have the test. At about 28 weeks' gestation, I had to see this hosp. obstetrician. As he went through my history, he queried me why I hadn't had this test to check for Down syndrome. He then yelled at me, telling me I only had a 2 to 3% chance of having a normal baby; that it would be my fault if I had a disabled child; and despite this being a Catholic Hosp., they could not force their ideas on me! I was so upset, that all I could say, was that I was a Catholic, and conversation stopped there. Later I would learn anyway, that I had a severe pregnancy complication requiring admittance to the high risk ward until birth of baby. Here I witnessed the dedication of so many good staff, running to save babies who might birth suddenly @ 25 weeks gestation say, (alarms would sound etc.) before taken to special care units. At this time, I was warned that my baby and I might not survive, owing to anticipated high blood loss. I was told to get my affairs in order; and spend much time with my family. It was so hard, that one day (hearing also that my father in law was dying!) I had this panic attack, and started crying out—staff murmuring about calling the psychiatrists in to help me. All I wanted to do was go down to the chapel and pray to Jesus in the tabernacle. Here I gave Him my worries, accepting His will for me. In an instant, my worries appeared lifted, and I accepted whatever would come. It was a powerful faith moment, to have to fully rely on God. Pastorally, I had great support, and valued the receipt of the sacraments just prior to this big operation, with huge blood loss, though a healthy son, [-] was born. I was placed in intensive care on life support, continuing to lose blood, before being operated on again to fix bleed. At one point, I only had 1 litre left, having lost twice my blood volume, and wasn't expected to live. Somehow though, I did, with many people saying it was a miracle. I would learn that when one has faith in God, all things are possible. I think God took me down this path for a reason, and with the recent Abortion Bills that passed in [-], I was much involved in protesting, and continuing. I am worried that if good people are pushed out, more girls and women will have to have more tests, abortion pushed for any reason.

This is the experience of one of the members of our small group: My life have been struck by a childhood trauma. In the Church, in a concrete community of faith (the Neocatechumenal Community in my parish) God allowed me to open up and receive consolation and healing. By helping me to accept my suffering God made of me a new person today. I learned to accept my

history and to bless God every day. Through the experience of the brothers and sisters in the community, shared in the weekly celebration at the light of the Word of God, my faith is growing and I am able to trust God, and to accept the history. Now I see that people that are struggling with their own lives look to Christians like me, as they see love and hope in them, when they are in the trouble. In school and beyond—many people came to me with issues faced in their life. I am no one, God showed me that I am a sinner, but the life in a small community of faith helped me a lot. This makes me a sign for the others. My faith has been also nourished by the preaching of the Kerygma and the periodical meeting with the catechists, who guide all the community in a post baptismal catechumenate, a way of conversion towards the renewal of the baptismal promises. It is an exciting journey where Jesus is really present, and helps me to live the life in fullness.

I attend regular Sunday Mass in my local community. I have taken my children each week. They feel part of our church family due to interactions with the church family.

If Canon Law decrees only bishops can attend and have input and control the outcome of a Plenary Council then the Australian Bishops Conference should immediately convene a Lay Council in parallel and concert with the Bishops Conference to allow the 98% of the Australian Church to be heard.

I have a great deal of respect and love for the religious sisters of Australia. Without the tireless work of these women, many Catholics would not have received the fine educations they did enjoy. I visit some of these sisters in nursing homes and it is a great privilege for me to be able to witness their faith journeys as they move towards their deaths. One sister, who is 88 and had a Massive stroke in her 30's, continues to offer pastoral care, from her wheelchair, to fellow residents.

I was raised by Catholic parents and educated in a Sydney Marist Bros. college. Regrettably, for the reasons referred to above, my faith in the Catholic religion has waned because of the changes in what I regarded as unshakable ethics not to be tampered with at the whim of some jokers in fancy dress, multi coloured skull caps driving better cars than myself, flying first class, staying in expensive accommodation, going on expensive holidays and so called pilgrimages while at the same time flooding me with requests for donations to "priests' retirement funds", seminary funds, Australian and international commitments. Not since the "reformation" when people accused of being heretics were tortured and executed has our Church seen so many changes in its fundamental beliefs. At an age when I should be reinforcing my beliefs in Jesus in the hope that I may one day be accepted into his realm, I feel as if I have been duped by what is really now just another "sect" of which there are many.

This is my Church and I am concerned that if the Curia and Pope Francis and the Australian Bishops Conference doesn't do the hard yards then I shall be a Catholic in faith only and not in a Church which doesn't listen.

My experience of being educated by the Sisters of St. Joseph (while not a good rounded education) was very positive. They are a group of good and devoted educators.

I would like to share my story to give context as to why I am passionate about the previously mentioned and attached points. I do not share vulnerably to make anyone feel uncomfortable but

rather to highlight the complexity of being a Catholic in the midst of life's joys and challenges. I am a [name of city] girl, raised in the Church by a loving family. My family have been very active in the practise of their Catholic faith. It was within this context that I was sexually abused, at the age of 6, by a lay church leader. Whilst I did not speak of, or deal with this event until I was in my 30's, the impact of the abuse was highly prevalent from that moment on. My next sexual experience was as a 14-year-old. Whilst attending a week long, Catholic, youth and young adult camp, a 21-year-old male raped me. What follows in my sexual history includes promiscuity and further trauma. I do not know who I would be, or what my life would have been like without these traumas. I do know that because of them, life for me was hard. I have been one of the 45% of Australians who will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. At 15, 10 months after the rape occurred, I tried to take my own life. But for the grace of God, and my mother waking up at 3am to pluck her eyebrows, I would not be alive. That same year I had sat in a room with the rest of my youth group hearing about 'God's plan for love and life'. Catholic youth ministry in the 1990's was all about Theology of the Body and purity. I remember sitting in that room so vividly and I recall thinking that it was too late for me. I was unworthy of a good love. I was less than. My life became a swinging pendulum of wanting to believe that I could somehow prove myself worthy of God (and hopefully a man's) love; and accepting any form of love and affection that I could obtain. My promiscuous lifestyle left me broken and lacking hope. It was not until I chose (bravely, I believe) to deal with the trauma of abuse that I began to heal. Throughout the 2 years of counselling and the police reporting process that followed, I clung to the anchor of my faith with all the strength that I had. In the pain of dealing with the trauma though I found God. I encountered God in that darkest moment of my life. I encountered His heart breaking for me. I encountered Him telling me that it wasn't meant to be this way. I encountered Him promising me that He loved me and that there was nothing I could do to make Him love me anymore, or any less. I found hope and peace.

Lucky to grow up in a devout Catholic family in the 1950's and 60's which gave me the confidence to be proud of my Faith as it gives me much joy. I wish we could share more of it in the community.

My priest as a child was a wonderful humble man. He was engaging and humble and relevant.

In the 1970s, there was a tremendous enthusiasm for Bible study groups and daily personal prayer based on the scriptures, as Vatican II's document Dei Verbum desired. But then, in the last few decades, this pastoral energy has dissipated, and the official Church has turned its attention more to a focus on the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church, without a concomitant emphasis on personal renewal and the importance of an individual's conscience. Mercifully, Pope Francis is trying to bring back that balance.

One participant grew up Lutheran and attended that church regularly and was constantly preached at to 'hate' Catholics. He decided to visit a Catholic Church at Mass and became a Catholic, married a Catholic and has remained faithful for 46 years.

I was raised and educated in the Catholic faith which has given me a wide set of values. One of those key values has been respect for the sanctity of life at all its stages. The Church's pro-life stance has been something that has helped sustain my own stance as well as my faith in the

Church. However the strength with which the Church has defended this sanctity in recent times has been diminishing, with the response to the abortion laws in [-] late last year sorely disappointing. To date there appears to have been no response to the proposed euthanasia laws. If the Church truly is pro-life then it needs to stand up as a whole and oppose anti-life forces not matter what secular aggression it may face. The Church as a whole has to stand with its individual members and not leave them to fight this battle in isolation. The Church has to STAND for life!

The family group movement should be encouraged in all parishes.

The richness of scripture revealed in the liturgy of the word post-Vatican II. An ongoing desire to understand the Jewish roots of the Christian tradition.

I was formed in the faith in Australia by the strong faith and example of my parents and grandparents, priests and religious teachers who taught and modelled the faith clearly and directly and by the support of fellow Catholic School students, parishioners, and some exemplary Catholic public figures. My parents were good people, both Catholic but struggling to build family and home in post WW2 North [-]. Continuous employment was difficult, let alone well paid employment. Protestant religions were in the ascendency. Catholics were actively discriminated against in business and in the job market through the influence of many anti-Catholic Masonic Lodges and others. We didn't share my father with the pub or race track. He happily denied himself luxuries and leisure to support us materially and in the faith. My father and mother took us to Mass and other sacraments/devotions that are fairly rare these days i.e. confession, benediction, Stations of the Cross. Mum and my grandmother read a lot of extracts from Catholic publications to us as well as the Bible (Yep: the full Bible—Old Testament and all). When I became an altar server, Dad got up early and took me on his bicycle to and from the 6:30AM weekday Masses... Then he rode off 6 KM to work. As the Catholic children of tax paying parents we received no government assistance with our schooling. This was achieved at great cost to our family and through the astonishing devotion and hard work of teaching nuns and brothers. There was an enormous amount of voluntary school building and maintenance by Catholic parents mostly on weekends. We gained a very clear and memorable faith framework through instruction and study of the Catechism. Essentially we learned the difference between what is right and what is wrong and about choosing to do what is good. This is notably absent today and confusion and erroneous notions are evident while talking to poorly formed young people, adults and the occasional religious who spout little more than echoes of corrupt and evil but powerful media influences. From the earliest I recall that we Catholics (who hadn't yet become an inoffensive Church of only nice agreeable things), were the targets of much abuse. I can still see the train coming into the station near our school, full of bigoted state school students shrieking abuse at us. High school was extremely disciplined (Marist Brothers) and mostly self-funded by our parents and a lot of hard voluntary work. I didn't notice and of the historical abuse darkly referred to in the media these days but we did receive some corporal punishment for our many boyish transgressions but happily escaped many we deserved. Despite our lack of resources we succeeded in school and after vocationally. Some of us lost our way for a while when we moved away from our local Catholic influence to distant employment or universities, but mostly we kept the faith and a sort of by-product a fairly well balanced life.

Nothing outstanding, just an everyday simple Christian who tries to instil good values in our children, tries to live out the gospel by loving my neighbour in practical ways, cooking and serving the homeless and God's poor in soup kitchens, reaching out to people going through difficult times within my parish in practical ways, and basically just trying to be Jesus hands and feet wherever I can.

I have now met former Anglican married priests who are now Catholic priests and doing a fine job. I think if we allow this then we must allow priests to marry.

The Church has and will always play an important part in forming my relationship with Jesus. Unfortunately, sometimes the Church is also what holds me back from connecting with Jesus. The Church has so many shining rays of light which demonstrate what Jesus did for us! There are points, however, that the Church is too proud to admit that it can be wrong, that it isn't the only way for someone to experience their faith, it needs to be more open and accepting.

I am 73 years old, the first of the Baby Boomers, received the sacraments and was taught by the nuns. I left school, married, ceased going to Mass for various reasons and had 3 children who were all baptised but went to State Schools. My 3 grandchildren attended Catholic schools, are good, beautiful young adults of whom I am very proud. They don't attend Mass but that's okay. In 1985 my son received serious head injuries when struck by a car. I went to Mass that night and Confession the following week. I have been attending regularly ever since. God was there for me when needed and sustained me through the roughest times. In 2001, we moved to a new house and changed parishes where I met 2 Ursuline sisters, one of whom was a trained theologian and ex-teacher. I also started attending information session organised by the Church in [-]. The Archbishop at the time invited speakers (some of whom were from overseas) to talk. My present faith and beliefs have grown significantly over the last 18 years or so to the extent that there is little in common to the faith of my childhood. The two sisters have since passed away although I am still in touch and meet regularly with others sisters and lay people in a small group. I moved parishes again about 8 years ago when a new parish priest arrived as I felt he was too Pre-Vatican II for the new me. I am now well and truly settled and involved in the new parish and last year attended a mission conducted by a Passionist priest who did a marvellous job of growing our faith and bringing us up to date with current teachings. If appropriate, someone from the Council can contact me about sharing more details of my story.

Fear. We were scared not to go to Mass on Sunday, or we'd be caned the next day at school. Religion was not meaningful to us. We didn't understand, just told "you're a Catholic. Believe this, or else". Hopefully young people are being taught about the true meaning of what being a Catholic is, and how they can relate to it. We were taught being a Catholic was the true and only religion, and to believe it, not question what was taught, just accept that we were superior to other Christians.

I don't have a specific story but over the years I have encountered or read of many people who are quietly and selflessly doing incredible and good work. Unfortunately we tend to hear more of the negative stuff, rather than the much more prevalent good. I just pray that we are open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to meet the many challenges of our times, and that we can set the foundations for a better tomorrow for all!

If it wasn't for the support of Project officers from Evangelisation [-] I would probably have left the Church years ago, especially [-] and [-].

My parents and the Catholic Schools I attended shaped my faith. I love our Faith, especially the Eucharist.

To keep it short I would simply say I love the Church and the Catholic faith that one can encounter. As a young man, I am drawn to the Church not because it has watered itself down, but because I have encountered integrity and the truth of Jesus Christ. Because I am seeking more than what the world can offer me, I am seeking the real deal. I have encountered much authentic love, joy, peace and hope in the relationships I have established thanks to Christ through His Church. I have been drawn in by the mystery of the Mass and the service of for the most part—faithful priests. I have been drawn in by the inspiration of many incredible Saints. And through the Church I am trying to grow closer to God, Mary and every human being I encounter along my life journey. I am trying to do the will of God and though I am pretty bad at it at times, I know I can continue to strive through the Church which God has as gift for us and the entire world.

I have found that a lot of the parishioners now days share a very protestant type of faith which focuses on the 'happy' side of Christianity. I have seen little rigor from both priests and parishioners to practice the more difficult aspects of our Faith i.e. suffering, daily prayer, daily sacrifice etc.

I have grown up in the Catholic Faith in Austria. I studied to become a religion teacher there and these studies brought me further away from the Church teachings, as it was all wrong interpretation and 'this does not matter' and 'that does not matter, as long as you FEEL it is okay'. 15 years later, I listened to Radio Maria and by coincidence, there was a lecture on sin. The priest was clear in what he was saying, according to our Church teachings. He was brave and direct, but also loving. I went to confession and have re-kindled my faith. I had to learn a lot, through reading and listening to speeches from truly Catholic priests. The Catholic Church needs to educate its people, not constantly tell them that everything is ok that is happening in the world. What is the main purpose of the Church? Why did Jesus found it? To SAVE us from hell. What is the Church doing in that regard? Amazingly little. As if it is uncomfortable truth. I feel so let down by my Church. This plenary council shows it as well. 'How can we adjust our faith to the Australian lifestyle?'??? We DON'T. We follow the Church teachings and we hold dear to our faith. We are not afraid to speak what our faith is. The Church should be strong, holding on to its tradition and values and history. Not become soft and be afraid of hurting someone's feelings.

I have had great spiritual experience through a laity led men's group called MenAlive who conducted parish based weekends. The follow up and regular sharing of the scriptures on a weekly basis with such men gives me support and spiritual strength to try to follow Christ better. MenAlive experiences at their annual MAX weekend led me to volunteer and ultimately take on secretary of [-]. ([-]). This charity, led by Deacon / Padre [-] supports the wellbeing and spiritual needs of veterans (and families) of our Armed forces and Fed Police who suffer post-traumatic stress. Govt. support does not include a spiritual component and hence no healing of the moral damage and the soul. It also supports veterans and families of other countries, particularly Timor-Leste.

One of the women in our group works for the government in the area of Child Protection. This lady humbly suggested that women need to be able to make important decisions on behalf of the Catholic Church, and not just be given an advisory role. Initially her views were resisted by several members of the group, but this progressed to many members thinking a more democratic model of leadership from all levels of the Church would help prevent mistakes like the ones that are very topical in the Church today.

The Plenary Council Prayer is significant for me. It should be said at all celebrations of Holy Mass on Sunday and on weekdays. Again, it does not take long to say. Last year I was fortunate to attend Holy Mass at [-]. I think the celebrant was from Fiji. The way he celebrated Holy Mass would teach a few in [-] the value of doing things properly!

I am 29 and a young father. I was a disengaged Catholic during my years at a Catholic high school—I attended the bare minimum requirements of Sunday Mass, confession once a year and fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It wasn't until I went to University and interacted with the Catholic Chaplaincy where I discovered the beauty, history, understanding of the Church that I had been denied my teenage years. I had felt betrayed by the older generations in my Church that the truth, beauty and goodness that read about and was hearing about had been hidden from me. I have since, though my own initiative, continued to learn about the beauty of the Church. I attend both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Latin Rite and I am disappointed that this is so divisive. Seminarians should be trained in both so that both can be offered more widely.

Trying to live the faith within the Church in the 1980s and 1990s was particularly difficult. The school system too readily embraced secular values, many of which were contrary to Church teachings. At the parish level, we were typically led by those only interested in the "new and vibrant" and being "socially relevant". There was little interest in the Blessed Sacrament beyond it being a celebratory meal, and there was a tacit rejection of the Real Presence—as evidenced by hiding tabernacles, the disappearance of monstrances and genuflection. Sadly, in recent times, one of the best sources to nourish one's faith is the internet—specifically Facebook groups and YouTube.

Members of the Commission have committed themselves to engaging directly with people facing injustice and oppression, particularly Aboriginal people, refugees and people seeking asylum, Pacific Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders facing the challenges of climate change and the Melanesian peoples of West Papua who are facing on-going oppression at the hands of Indonesian occupiers. We have seen more clearly what God is calling us to do by direct encounters with these people who are our brothers and sisters. We are committed to encouraging fellow Catholics to do the same—to walk in solidarity with people living with injustice and oppression.

I was fortunate to grow up in a Catholic family, not overtly religious, and attend schools with good teachers, Josephite nuns at [-] and Augustinians at [-]. Through 5 years of being an altar boy serving 5 different priests and 4 years with 9 priest-teachers, I never encountered an abusive priest. I believe that I received a wonderful education in the faith and encouragement to continue that faith education throughout life. Although my children have had similar experience, 7 of them

have drifted away from the faith or rejected it completely. I know that I must carry some responsibility for this but the problem seems to be endemic in the Catholic community. I have not felt comfortable teaching my children their faith except by example. I have erred by leaving too much to the religious education at schools and not taken a direct approach.

When I attended the [-] Conference 2016 run by [-] youth in [-], I was overwhelmed by the atmosphere of the conference that the young people made. It seemed that those young desired the concrete guide of the Church to nurture themselves in hearing of the voice of God. I was impressed and I found that I should figure out what missions of God, especially for the youth I should carry out.

I've grown up in the Church and been blessed and privileged to interact with a broad cross-section of Catholics, which has given me an appreciation of the diversity of the Church. I love it in its fullness. I'm so grateful for the many different communities within the Church that I've been a part of that have loved me and fostered the growth and development of my relationship with God, my knowledge of God and the Church, my self-understanding and my giftedness. While this has been my experience of the Church, I am not naïve enough to think this has been everyone's experience of the Church. I've sat with friends who have shared with me how hurt they have been by the Church and its people, how we have caused irreparable damage in their lives. I've witnessed firsthand the brokenness of people within the Church (including myself) and how it has affected and failed so many people. I want what I have received from the Church to be the average experience of Catholics, not the failure of the Church that so many people have experienced. I am hopeful that with each step the Church takes, such as that of the Plenary Council, we can draw closer to fulfilling God's plan for the Church of Australia.

I grew up in a very proud and faithful Catholic family. My parents endeavoured to impart the faith to my siblings as best they could. Family Rosary and extended family Cenacle evenings is what fostered the faith at home in my younger years. However at the Catholic school I attended for 13 years I was constantly having to double check what the religion teacher taught to see if it was true or not. As it is said frequently, "if you want to lose your Catholic faith, go to a Catholic School!" This was very nearly my experience. However parish life was very positive I had to extremely faith-filled men as parish priests growing up. It was their constant encouragement reassurance and guidance that kept me on the right path. They encouraged me to Altar Serve than later play the organ at Church. They encouraged all the people my age to use their talents in service for the Church and God. When I got older and was an integral part of the music team at my parish the usual parish politics played out however the bigger picture was always kept at the focus which was the genuine praise, worship and the sacrifice that was taking place at each Mass. Generally I think we have a little way to go liturgically in Australia children's Masses whilst for children are far too immature. I can remember being 9 and attending a school Mass and commenting to my mum when I got home how I felt like they thought we were dumb. Also liturgically greater emphasis needs to be given to the education of what is actually going on at the holy sacrifice of the Mass which that sentence alone these days is only associated with RAD TRADs. The result will be far less cringe-worthy liturgies. Thank goodness liturgical dances have gone out of fashion.

I am a "cradle-Catholic" having grown up going to Mass every Sunday and attending a Catholic primary school and high school. As is the story for many young people, these things had little to

do with my personal relationship with Jesus and as soon as I was "free" of school restriction and childhood obligation, Church became of zero importance in my life. It was not until my mother offered me a free trip to Sydney for WYD2008, where I encountered many exciting people including a [-] Team that that perspective was changed. Through that connection, a year serving with [-] myself and a personal encounter with Jesus, my life is now more geared to trying to live out God's will in my life.

Being taught that Christianity is about how we act and not empty words in prayers and preaching.

I'm an only child and a practicing Catholic all my life thanks to my parents. However, when I was 15 years old, I didn't want to go to Church anymore and I was looking for ways to leave the Church without disappointing my parents. My mother forced me to go to hear a catechesis in the parish given by an Italian bloke and given that I was being bullied by Italians in my school (who were in the majority) I wasn't keen to go. Anyway, I went, and I thought I'd disappear after 15 minutes or so. Well I heard something there that kept me listening until now. Long story short I entered the Neocatechumenal Way which saved my life because a year later I was failing at school and there was no hope for me. I had friends and neighbours that had suicided and so I planned my suicide. It was while I was in this state that I discovered God loved me even when my family, teachers, friends and even I had given up on me. Christ forgave me while I was in my sin. I married a girl in the same community and after a few years we offered ourselves to be missionary. We were sent personally by [-] on 3/01/1991 and we went to [-] near [-] for 22 years. My wife and I had fertility problems, but we have four children. We have been in mission in [-] for a further 6 years so far. I've been in the same community for 39 years and I've seen many wonders. People giving a living witness of the death and resurrection of Christ in their daily lives because they are looking after elderly parents in their home, or couples that have large families like 10-14 children thus demonstrating that Humane Vitae is not just an idea but that it is a reality that can be sustained through the Holy Spirit on a daily basis in spite of our sins and weaknesses. People who have forgiven the unforgivable such as sexual abuse, domestic violence, theft, cases of malpractice from surgeons. People whose parents have survived torture under Saddam Hussein. People whose children have been involved in organised crime and yet have recovered their way back into society. Divorcees living in celibacy for many years and still in full communion with the Church. Women who have aborted and yet recovered their motherhood and had more children. Drug addicts and alcoholics who have recovered. Also workaholics and people who follow their career at all costs and yet change life and engage with their children and families. All this is the consequence of The Neocatechumenal which is a practical implementation of the Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council. Sacrosanctum Concilium the Eucharist, Dei Verbum the mid-week celebration of the word, Gaudium et Spes the Convivensa or living together and Lumen Gentium the Christian life lived in a practical way.

At present, we're stunned, bruised, bleeding, ashamed because of the Sexual Abuse Crisis. We need to be listening, compassionate, accepting of what others may think/feel; to be humble, truthful, repentant, totally transparent—and never give up the vision/spirituality of Jesus.

A few years ago I was at a conference I was helping to facilitate and was really busy. When a main session was on in the auditorium I was outside organising some things. At one point, I needed to ask a question of someone in the auditorium and ran in to find them, however it was at the point

in the rally where we were having Adoration. I quickly found a spot I could kneel down and looked around the room to try to find the person I needed, my mind was still on the job I needed to get done. As a part of Adoration the bishop took the Monstrance around the room and at one point he stopped directly in front of me and lifted up the Eucharist. I was so overwhelmed with just the power of the moment. Here was the Creator of the universe, God who loves us so much that He would humble Himself to become just a wafer of bread and here He is right before me. The way the lighting was and where the bishop stood meant that I was in the shadows and I thought to myself, 'I am in the shadow of Christ. Exactly where I am meant to be' In this space always close enough that His image is cast on me, but it didn't feel like I was stood in darkness, it was like I was in the light of Christ. His shadow is still the brightest place I will ever know. I feel like the same is true for the Church, we must stand in the shadow of Christ, never in front, never blocking him from view, but so close, standing in the light of Christ.

There are many instances that have shaped my faith. Most of them small and mostly by lay people. Just recently I had a knee replacement at the [a Catholic hospital], [-] and the daily communion and concern by the ministers to the sick was wonderful, especially when my mother died whilst I was in hospital.

As a member of a Uniting Church which is involved in an ecumenical partnership with a Catholic parish in a local school, I have appreciated much of what the Catholic tradition offers: local liturgies in the school are in language which is accessible to a wide range of people, and the sense of the mystery of the encounter with the divine is valuable in an age which has come to expect everything to be explained in concrete terms. However, I do feel excluded and regarded as a 'second class citizen' when I am present at a Mass but excluded from full participation, when my own Church practises an open table and invites all to be fully involved.

I was separated from the Church for 23 years. It was during that time in the struggles of life through sickness and brokenness that I really needed to know that I was not alone. Thankfully the roots of my faith, taught by the Catholic Nuns was deep enough for me to return. I attended a parish life in the Spirit seminar and received tremendous grace, giftedness and healing through prayer ministry for Baptism in the Spirit. A prayer group was formed and the members continued to lay hands on me for healing and little by little the fears and pain of the past was healed and I was ready to serve the God that I had encountered. I was so grateful to Jesus for his healing and for the charismatics who prayed for me that I have served the Church through Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) for over 30 years in parish faith and leadership, CCR leadership and healing ministry in this archdiocese, in CCR state and national leadership positions. This has given me purpose and fulfilment as I have reached out to others in their need. The Lord uses broken people to help broken people. He mends us to send us to others.

I offer my suggestion because when I finished Year 12 in a Catholic high school I had no answers to why we believe what we do. I learnt very little about my faith in the six years of high school. None of the Big questions of life were explained using our faith and I had no knowledge to be able to discuss my faith with others. Friends from other Christian traditions were able to discuss and defend their faith but I could not. We never did any history of the Church and never read any documents or Fathers of the Church. There was no discussion about the Trinity or any of the other doctrines of the Church. The sacraments were presented very simply with only brief explanations

and no link to Scripture or history. The beauty and depth of the Eucharist was not expanded upon, so most of my classmates found it irrelevant and boring. We studied so much in our other subjects, that I felt we could have learnt a lot more of the truths and beauty of our Catholic faith.

To be honest, protestant churches have taught me a lot about what is the heart of this. Jesus. Yes the theology might be a bit different and incorrect but at least they stick to it. Catholics are so bad at theology we don't even know why we are Christians. His name is Jesus. Everything we do is on His name, we obey Him by obeying his Bride the Church.

Always Good People. Church is Us.....

Re Child abuse I cannot find words to express my disgust and lack of faith/confidence in the leadership of the Catholic Church.

Our family moved around because of my job and it was not always easy to fit into new surroundings and customs. Wherever we went we knew the local Catholic parish would be welcoming and a haven in the cacophony of daily life and we were never let down.

There are some people who are working on courses for Catholics to learn how to dialogue and defend the faith in a professional, serene and effective manner. One of them is called "Catholic Voices" from the UK. [-] Study Centre is a project of the [-], a non-profit company promoting educational activities, character development and Christian ideals. Pastoral care of [-] is entrusted to Opus Dei, a personal prelature of the Catholic Church. At [-] Study Centre, we have an initiative called "Dare to Think". It is a forum for people of all religions and philosophical outlooks to dialogue and share their thoughts on fundamental issues of life. The topics we have discussed in the past include: The Pursuit of Happiness, Freedom, Love, Time, Friendship, etc. We have found this to be a very good way of passing on the Christian perspective as people listen and find points in common with their own beliefs.

We have seen that it is a good experience to include in marriage preparation courses the testimony of older couples who have been faithful, i.e. "couple mentoring". There is an organisation called Family Enrichment Australia (<https://www.fea.org.au/>) which offers ongoing courses for couples throughout their married life and provides mentors to follow up and troubleshoot problems which helps others persevere.

At [-], we have a community service component in which we take the different age groups to activities of social impact. We have been involved with the Blind Eye Ministries with the homeless in [-]. It has been an edifying experience for the volunteers because it fosters generosity among those who take part in these activities, teaching compassion to counteract self-centeredness. Also, we have seen the involvement of mothers and young professionals who give their time in sharing what they have learned by helping as mentors for the girls in a younger group. The girls benefit from having the Christian witness of someone older to which they can look up as a role model for the future.

At [-], we have the opportunity to have the sacrament of Confession often. Since this is a centre for women, there is a Confessional with a screen and a separate door for the priest. This simple

measure is very appropriate to respect anonymity and it avoids any misunderstandings. We also have a chaplain who provides personal attention needed for spiritual direction and is helpful to consult on matters of faith and morals.

Some parishes are very welcoming as they know their community and are attentive to each other. In this way, they practice charity and more people will be willing to engage in their activities. For example in [-] (parish at [-]), the parish council is aware of greeting new-comers, they organise a monthly morning tea with the community, and celebrate special occasions together.

1. Many voices at our parish meetings witnessed how our parish's activities, ministries and sacraments have enriched, comforted and brought great joy to parishioners and visitors.
2. We have also heard of how other faith traditions welcome and provide care and support to individual parishioners. As the Body of Christ we must strive to do the same. We are called to offer sincere and radical hospitality.
3. One noteworthy and transformative story is the experience of joy and love felt by one parishioner whose child was baptised during a Mass. He felt the whole community was involved in the acceptance of his child into the Catholic community and it created a special and moving time in his life. One that he feels the parents and families of all children who are baptised into the Body of Christ need to experience.

Living in these times of turmoil in the Church and in society is faith building, I believe, but also very tough and disturbing. I have been battling with my sinfulness and our sinfulness as human beings but also with what I understand to be a major attack on the Church, family, masculinity, femininity and many other important aspects of this life that our Lord has given us, by Satan. I believe that we are in a major battle for our souls and those of others.

Am just hoping God comes back soon and fix the mess.

When I was a teenager, I was a part of the parish youth group. My youth coordinator was so welcoming of every one of us, the misfits that we were. She taught us to pray by praying aloud herself and gave us the space and time to muster the courage to voice our prayers too. Over time we became more confident in sharing our hearts. And we bonded as a group, creating our own little community that connected with the wider Church community at youth Mass and also going to Archdiocesan events. Most of us are still in the faith, 10+ years on. At school I wrote a paper about why women should be allowed to be priests—for equality's sake. But as I've grown in faith and spent time learning what the Church teaches and the why behind it, I've come to realise that men and women are not created the same. We have different roles to play. And whilst women have something to offer the Church that men do not and can and should take on roles of leadership, we are not designed to play the role of 'Father'. Now, in my late 20's and working for the Church, I am surrounded by older women who strongly feel the injustice of not allowing women priests. This deeply upsets me as I feel like my opinion doesn't matter and in their eyes is 'wrong'. They don't seem to see just how many women work for the Church and have roles of leadership. They come across as very bitter towards men and they undermine any man in positions of authority over them. Do they not see the special role that they as women play in the Church? Do they not value their own worth and the role they are playing? Why should being a

priest be considered the topmost rung of authority and worth? I think that once upon a time, there was much inequality between men and women and that the women in my office are of the generation who fought for that not to be so—but they haven't realised that because of all they did, we don't have this problem anymore. I, as a woman in the Church, do not feel like there is any barrier to me achieving positions of authority.

I have fond memories of a youth group that was important to me in my teenage years. Our very disabled son was welcomed into a sacramental program 11 years ago and received all of the sacraments.

I was working in a secondary school. I was teaching boys. The boys were generally speaking not religious and saw themselves as Catholic by name only. We were working with homeless men and women. We had a street van that went out two nights a week and five mornings and built community, dignity and respect with the homeless. In class we introduced core spiritual concepts; coming as guest, be aware of their sacred story, know their innate dignity, choose to be deeply present, allow your heart to open in compassion. The students loved that language. One day—we were out early for the breakfast and I saw one of our boys sit down on the ground next to a homeless man. The man was on a bench. Not a lot of talk seemed to be going on. After some time the boy got up and got the fellow a cup of coffee. Then silence. Two weeks later—same van, some venue, same man and boy. The ritual was repeated but this time the boy chatted a little and then got some food as well. Two weeks later—same pattern but this time the boy sat down on the bench next to the man and they chatted away. I asked the boy, "What were you doing?" He told me! "Sir, you said to come as guest, you told us it was holy ground and that we were to 'namaste' to their innate dignity. Well I wanted to deeply respect his space—so I came gently as a guest to him. I did not rush him. I respected his place, space and story. Slowly he began to talk. He felt comfortable with me. It was special; it was sacred—a true encounter. I sensed that it was special—this encounter and this relationship. On the last morning I told him my name and he shared his; he looked at me and I felt that it was God looking at me. I have never felt that way before. Guest works Sir! Yes, they have a story! Yes it is all about presence and yes, it is holy ground!" That story proved beyond doubt to me that when we invite people to encounter and relationship, give them language from the heart and invite them to reflect on their experience—magic happens!

I was raised in Catholic family and attended a great Christian Brothers' college as a student. I studied education and have taught in Catholic schools 21 years. I am gay and have been with partner for 22 years—we married last year. My husband is also a teacher. For over 10 years we have both been school leadership of Catholic schools. We have both led the religious life of our schools. We have always been fearful of jobs. Last year I was physically assaulted and publicly vilified for being gay by a raging teacher at my school. The whole incident was immediately covered up—I was told not to go to the police, I was threatened and intimidated by barrister, and asked to resign—simply for being the innocent victim of a physical and verbal attack. This was last year, in 2018! The cover up is alive and well in the Church. I decided to pursue the issue with the police and the courts. The Church would rather hide a violent offender, than acknowledge a school leader in Catholic school is gay. For years I have heard priests and bishops say horrible things about gay people. I have been ostracised by my own parish. I am convinced this is not God's

plan! I believe the Spirit is challenging the Church's fear and prejudice against gay people. This experience which has dragged on for 12 months already has made me stronger—I am gay and have faith—I have the right to safety. I have the right to stand with others in the Church and continue with my own sense mission and purpose. Try and silence me now. The winds of change are blowing!

1. The shaping of my faith began at the [-] ([-]) Sisters of Mercy convent and then at a Christian Brothers [-] College.
2. My faith lapsed for over 20 years after school until I began taking my 5 yo daughter to Mass. After a few Masses she asked me, when driving to Church, "Why do we go to Mass? I replied to her "so that we can learn more about God". To which she replied "Well, you don't know much about God if you have to go to church every Sunday".
3. I was put out by this answer as I had been to 9 years of religious instruction in a Catholic boarding school. But she was right, I did not know much about God and I then had the choice of either walking away from the Church again or going back.
4. I was lucky to have a local church that was inviting and so I stayed and became involved in most Mass ministries, Pastoral Council, Catholics Returning Home, Scripture study etc. I know more about God, about myself and my faith.
5. I have learnt that our faith is limited and fragile and one has to work to hang onto it.
6. I believe many of our unchurched Catholics have faith but have walked away from the Church for various reasons. Now due to the scandals and poor leadership and clergy who are out of touch with mainstream society, it is far harder for them to return. The clergy retreat to the comfort of their parishes and the faithful without attempting to engage the unchurched except when they come knocking on the parish door.

My wife who is a cradle Catholic whereas I am a convert. She has a blind faith that is remarkable. She does her bit in life but trusts God to do the hard bits and lead her where he wants her to go, not where she wants to or thinks she needs to go. This blind faith is truly inspirational.

I encountered Jesus as a very young child and my relationship with Jesus was nurtured thanks to my family being members of [-] Community. Growing up, Church for me was fun, full of purpose, with great formation and deep connection to others. Through all of this, I'm so grateful to have been raised in the reality of the personal Pentecost, experiencing the in daily life as well as in community. This upbringing has shaped my adult life and faith. I am still a member of [-] and I am so grateful for my 'home for mission'.

I can honestly say that little has strengthened my faith. I am hanging in praying for something better. I am almost ashamed to admit that I am a Catholic. I have experienced a lot of "Catholic bashing" and am finding it harder and harder to defend my Church.

Our third son died shortly after his birth. It was a terrible time. I was so angry with God..... I still attended Mass every Sunday but I couldn't pray, I couldn't sing the hymns, I couldn't respond to anything. I thought I was going to lose my faith as well as my son. But God sent me a wonderful, caring curate priest (who has now left the priesthood) and a group of people from my parish who invited me to join their prayer and discussion group. I am positive that these people saved me and my faith. Attending Mass didn't help me but the love and care of my community did.

Until 2018, I had loved being an active member of the Catholic Church since joining through RCIA 30 years ago and fulfilling many roles as a passionate disciple. Then unfortunately an experience left my family (my husband an active Catholic since birth, as were my children) disgruntled at the pastoral approach of our priest (a married convert) enough that we no longer identify with a parish but wander among communities to participate in Eucharist. This has left us with only part of the Eucharist in our lives ... we do not feel supported or can we be of service to a community. As we readjust we have to work out how is this what God wants. When you bring "converted" priests into the fold, please make sure they are true to the shepherd's pastoral care rather than a tick in the box as another one that can quickly start filling in the void doing Masses. I had furthered my love of God's words by studying a Theology degree so my faith is very important. So for me to call out the work of a "shepherd" as being substandard is a dramatic event in my life. His effect on my adult children's faith is something you should be challenged by...the wrong is not always about safeguarding children but also about sheer arrogance that uses and abuses the Church given power.

Being part of small groups formed by Church people and friends that explore the scriptures, the Mass, role of Mother Mary in the Bible through watching videos, e.g. by Bishop Barron, has taught me a greater understanding, appreciation and love of my faith parishes need to initiate sessions like above and invite people to participate and learn.

- Being put in situations where we are asked to defend the Catholic Church when there is so much hurt and pain associated with the actions of the Institutional Church.
- Being asked how we can work for the Church.
- Being asked why we send our children to Catholic Schools .

Growing up in parish that has always supported Youth Ministry and having a parish priest that has always invested in a Youth Minister has been extremely fruitful in my life. Although I haven't always understood a lot about my faith I knew that I was part of a loving community who supported me. At times I felt alone and like there was no one my age on the same journey of faith, but through the generosity of my parish priest I was able to attend World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011, which was where my eyes were truly opened to the Universal Catholic Church. My faith was also deepened when I encountered Catholic Missionaries on my Secular University Campus. I had gone to an Anglican Boarding School for High School and had gone on a couple of overseas Protestant Mission Trips. The opportunity to encounter Catholics who were on fire for their faith and had a passion to share it changed the way I looked at and understood my faith. This experience led me to question and discern what life was really all about and where the Lord was calling me. For a time I felt called to serve on campus as well, both in Australia and overseas. I have experienced many friends and acquaintances walk away from their faith due to misunderstandings and at times uncharitable experiences. This is a sad occurrence and one I hope can be addressed in order to bring home many of the lost.

I love the Church, and love what it brings to the world. But, in part, it has been losing its way, and I want it to find it again. As a child, many of my heroes were humble people in the parish who did extraordinary things. They were poor people who spent their days serving the poor in the parish—fixing things, delivering furniture, bringing clothes and food. They were older people who served

the old and infirm—brightening their lives. They were in St Vinnies, in the "caring group", in all sorts of societies and groups. The settled refugees (Vietnamese, back in those days) and reached out to all sorts of people. They lived the Gospel, and they made the Gospel real and explicable. And they did not trumpet what they did—they barely let their left hand know what their right was doing. That was what I understood Church to be. But as I grew older, I became aware of a counter narrative. Those who seem to believe that the Church about imposing a strict set of rules, and becoming sufficiently "pure" to win God's love. Maybe I misunderstood their intent, but that is how it appeared to me. And that did not gel with what I understood of the Gospel—of the message being brought to Zacchaeus in the tree, to the woman at the well, to the tax collectors, to the woman with the alabaster jar, to the woman caught in adultery. To some people, it would seem, the only thing Jesus said on that day was "go and sin no more". I love my Church, and I want to understand the experience of those who see it differently to me, but I want a Church that reaches out to everyone, and shares the joy of the Gospel, and of a God who saves us, loves us, liberates us, and wants us to liberate others.

I had 57 years of defending the Church, contributing money, educating my children in Catholic schools, volunteering in care groups, St Vincent de Paul and so on. Now I am struggling to go to Mass. I feel like I've lost my identity.

Those attending Mass on Sunday should be discreetly friendly to everyone, ready to help others. Example: a friend was married to a Catholic and was considering becoming one when her husband died. She went to the local Catholic church but noted no friendliness. She then went to a local Protestant church where she was warmly welcomed. She joined that congregation and has remained there ever since. St Augustine: Anyone can cross himself with the sign of the Cross, anyone can say Amen; anyone can sing Alleluia. Anyone can be baptised, enter churches, build the walls of the basilicas. But the only thing that distinguishes the children of God is charity. It is indeed an important sign, an essential difference.

As a Catholic only recently had I realised the meaning of Mass readings, psalms, gospel each Sunday. Understand why the epistles were written, Paul writing Romans to Jews and Gentiles. To the people of Corinth. The shocking stories in Genesis. Finding meaning through humility.

I was brought up Catholic. I am a lawyer that deals with clients who have experienced sexual abuse. The Catholic Church is over represented in my pool of clients that range from Christian Brothers, priests, a bishop, nuns, surf lifesaving, Jehovah Witness, Anglican priest, the state of [-] and prison guards. I want a say where my Church goes from here. I want to tell somebody that the Catholic Church is doing badly in terms of how these poor people are being dealt with. A small example is one where my client achieved a compensation settlement with the Christian Brothers when he uttered through me that he would look at the settlement as a commercial arrangement. Talk to me please. [-]

My experience of faith has been one of great excitement, joy and fulfilment. As a young adult it was the questioning of both my Catholic faith and her teachings that led to a deeper awareness of the truth taught by the Church and the real, tangible love available through Jesus. The Good news, not only of Jesus, but also the rich teaching the Church holds on love, sex and Marriage was life-saving and life-changing for me. In particular, Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body was

instrumental in my life and something we must share widely for the conversion of many hearts and the formation of many Catholics.

In my youth I was involved in a parish youth group, we would meet regularly with other youth groups from our city. It was here that I had my first encounter with God and formed a personal relationship with Jesus. Where are these groups today? In my youth they were in most parishes. We had a young group who would perform the music at church, guitars, flutes, etc. We sang uplifting lively worship songs and felt part of the community.

In 1994, I was introduced to the NET teams, and to the world of Catholic renewal communities which I did not know even existed. Up to that time I had already left the Catholic Church for dead, to the point of being quite bitter about what I had not received from Her, or from anyone who represented Her. Instead I had been evangelised by my Anglican and Baptist friends with a simple message of God's love and salvation, and I wandered for years overseas exploring Protestant churches in search of a 'home', only to come full circle to the Catholic Church, painfully and slowly. I wouldn't wish that journey on anyone if I could help it. So what was missing?

1. Any preaching of the basic gospel message, in a simple, engaging way, that invited me to respond and give my heart to the Lord.
2. Any teaching or invitation about baptism in the Holy Spirit, or any opportunity to be prayed for with the laying on of hands.
3. Any experience of contemporary worship that moved my senses and prepared me in an environment where the above could happen.
4. The authentic witness of other young people my age who were active disciples of Jesus.

One year I was living in [-] and went to Mass where an old charismatic priest in an inner southern suburb used to do prayer for healing with anointing oil after Mass. I had a lot of indecision going on in my life and lined up for prayer, as I was also struggling with chronic fatigue. When he anointed me with the oil and prayed over me in tongues I felt nothing short of waves of electricity flowing up and down through my body, as if I had just been plugged into an electric socket. Except it was like waves of love and healing. I have never forgotten it. It wasn't long after this experience that I was accepted to serve with a national youth ministry in [-], and when I got there, suddenly realised my chronic fatigue had gone, which I was worried would follow me and hinder me from serving in full-time ministry. I am now 50 years old, have been serving the Lord on mission ever since, and that experience with that old faithful priest remains with me today. The question I ask is, what if he never persevered to minister in that way? What if he felt too timid because of his (then highly suspicious) charismatic gifts, an unsupported grace by many of his peers? And I thank God for that bold and faithful, and Spirit-led old priest who no doubt impacted the lives of countless others besides me. May others like him rise up to take his place, and may he rest in God's love.

I was 33 when God audibly spoke to me. He said "when you are truly grateful, then you will see the kingdom". Within a week I heard another voice more like angelic host saying "Come as you are" and a veil lifted from my eyes and I could behold the Kingdom! There is so much more to say and I have known his leading in my life continually since then.

I was born overseas but lived here nearly 30 years in many different parishes. We owe Our Lord respect in Holy places of worship. "Silence is a greatest mark of respect. And the first disposition for prayer is respect." St. Peter Julian Eymard reminded us in "Eucharistic meditation". Would be very helpful to remind all parishioners of that need, of respect in the House of God. We may come from different lands and cultures but we all need attitude of respect. "If you are coming to pray you are not coming to occupy yourself with other matters" (St. P.J. Eymard) Applies to all of us. Thank you. God bless you all!

As an organisation, we have worked in the field of chastity now for a number of years. As a Catholic organisation preaching the Church's teaching on sex would seem to many like a daunting task if not impossible. And yet in a few brief years, we have grown to be possibly Australia largest sexuality educator in schools. For me, it shows that the message is not the problem it may be the approach, style or pedagogy that most often brings us unstuck as Catholics. If we can introduce Catholic Moral teaching so easily to so many then it shows there is great hope. God knows there is a need. With prayer and God's grace, the Church in Australia can be an even greater influence in the years to come.

I attend Mass at a lot of different places across Australia when away from my faith community and in the last few years there has only been ONE Church that I have attended where a local parishioner has greeted me properly. Every now and then I might get a head nod as I walk in and am handed a bulletin/newsletter, but otherwise I walk in and out of Churches and am not greeted or welcomed. I am passionate about not letting this happen to others when they visit my Community.

My relationship with God is like a roller coaster. At times, I feel close to him and there are times I don't feel HIM being with me at all.

My faith was shaped by my family and by good people who offered further faith education at a national level.

I had a slow conversion. My journey began with reading material my mother put in my hands every time I came home from uni. I read the passion from 'The Poem of the Man God'. I read Matthew Kelly and Wayne Weible's stories of Medjugorje. I heard and read of healings and other supernatural events. A priest came to speak and he held a glove over my palm as I had confession. I felt sharp pains in my hand. It was bizarre. He would lift it off to pray for me and put it back on and the piercing pain would return. It was disconcerting. I later learnt it was one of Padre Pio's gloves. I didn't even know what a stigmatist was. But I felt a deeper awareness of the possible reality of God. I attended Marian conferences and 'Hearts on Fire'. It feels like there was more going on in those days. I also went to Medjugorje. I was astounded at the passion and genuine commitment of the people but especially the young. They longed to get up the front during Mass. I was healed of many things but largely I was given a peace I had never had and a request from our Blessed Mamma to follow the teachings of the Church even though I didn't even know what they all were. I listened to many personal testimonies (a precious faith building thing that I feel we need more of). I returned to [-] and walked into a church with a beautiful, married priest who was generous with his time and taught me a lot about why we do what we do; moments in Mass, beliefs etc. I spent a lot of time in the confessional room. When I married he also understood how

difficult it was to follow the Churches teaching on contraception; he had 6 children and I eventually birthed 5. I married a man from a Pentecostal church who eventually became a pastor for several years. I have experienced and been involved in, thriving youth groups and beautiful worship music (not as a leader). I have remained loyal to the Church when I've faced much criticism and many attacks on the Catholic Church and her teachings. It's been hard and I've wondered sometimes if it's been worth it. I tried to leave the Church twice but I felt God's hand on me to stay and listen only to His voice and no one else's. We managed to bring personal testimonies into Mass a couple of times. The response was amazing. Hearing other people's struggles with their faith and their real experiences with a healing and powerful Father, is life changing to many. Why do we let the priest do all the work? Could we get more public input? Maybe sharing a good thing God is doing in someone's life? Worth a try. Why can't women speak more at Church? I'm positive if there were women in places of authority in the Church, there's no way the 'old boys club' would've been available to cover it up or even give opportunities.

I left the Church in my 20s, because I detested its attitude towards women. I missed my faith. My intern drowned off [-]. It was 6 weeks before his body was found. I had to help organise the Catholic memorial service for his friends and staff. His parents had such strong faith. Their unwavering faith made me realise what was missing from my life. Their demonstration of faith drew me back to the Church ... but I remain rankled and quietly seethe over the second class treatment given to women. It makes a mockery of "equal opportunity".

Working with local drama groups, such as the Iona Passion Play, the lack of support from parishes and dioceses is astounding. Our Catholic schools seem to be educating many young people in drama, music and the arts, but they are not finding a place to express and develop their talents in their local parishes. Musicians and singers are not paid, and not often valued.

I am nearly 60 years old and attended state schools so have never had much instruction about my faith outside the Mass and other liturgies. A few years ago we were blessed with a parish priest who encouraged and supported parishioners to undertake some basic formal theology training (Cert III in Christian Ministry) in group settings. That study opened my eyes to a new perspective on my faith and led to further study and ongoing reading and reflection on my part. The group discussions also had a profound effect on me. Many of the people who undertook this study continue to have active roles in the parish and there are two of us who continue to lead prayer groups during Advent and Lent ten years on.

I have worked in the Church (paid and volunteered) for many years. I love my faith, but it is extremely broken. The leadership is non-existent as we have titles and an outdated fallible canon law that is not relevant. The world has moved fast and we are way behind. I see valuable people (lay and ordained) destroyed by politics and who go through the motions. Infighting over who has the power, who has control over what is in the newsletter, etc.... We have become a club that props ourselves up on Christ's shoulders and lost the ability to be on mission; in order to be on mission we are required to lose our individuality and take on a yoke of humility; brothers and sisters in Christ. I have become exhausted because many of our clergy are immovable. They are stale, and they are no longer on fire with the Spirit. These are wonderful and great men, who have picked up barnacles over the years and need help shaking them off. They need to be supported by the other 99% of the Church in a meaningful way. I seriously see hope for the Australian Church,

but it does need radical change. It needs help and this plenary council is the Church coming to the doctor asking for help. I only hope the council listens to the 99%.

I am a member of the Kingdom of God and a follower of Christ. This is helped by my membership of the Catholic Church because it includes people with deeply inspirational voices. However most of the hierarchy of the institutional Church is at best neutral in this process to the extent that if all the cardinals and 99% of the Vatican disappeared at worst there would be no difference.

Thank God for the ministries alive in the Church in Australia—NET Ministries, Ignite Youth, Emmanuel Community, Disciples of Jesus Community, World Youth Day, YMT Australia etc. etc. These ministries are drawing so many people into encounter and relationship and mission with Christ, including myself.

Plenty, but it isn't enough to ask intelligent questions; you have to listen intelligently to the answers. I have seen no evidence of this other than in parish/community groups which I value highly. Or, as Richard Rohr once opined—"Every expectation of a return is a resentment in the making." Fortunately, I have no expectations when made aware of the voting powers, roles and attendance at the council but wish it well in its endeavours. At least it provides the impression that people are being heard. I remain confident that Pope Francis will continue with his efforts to limit the harm done by the curia and that God's plan for us will be enacted. Ah, the mystery of it all. Enjoy the council.

I remember when I was young, I would go to Sunday school every Sunday and I loved it. I thank my mother for this experience, it has shaped the person I am today and my faith has remained strong ever since.

My family of 7 have spent a big portion of our time as a family travelling Australia and the world. And one thing is evident about the Catholic faith that I have seen and that is that the faith in other parts of the world is intertwined into their daily lives. It becomes a part of their whole world and life. We now home-school our children as the faith taught in Catholic Schools is almost non-existent. My husband and I attended Catholics schools and thoroughly enjoyed our time. We were poorly catechised by teachers who sometimes openly disagreed with Church teaching, were living disordered lives and yet were still our Religious Education Teachers. We barely ever read the Bible, never learnt of the saints, but completed an education with great scientific knowledge and largely devoid of the knowledge of our faith or history. Our siblings, other family members and childhood friends have largely fallen away from the faith, or of those who continue to attend Sunday Mass they believe only a subset of her dogmas and do not believe much of what she teaches is relevant to their lives. THAT I would guess is because they are chasing what society deems is worthwhile and not what the Church knows to be worthwhile. Her teachings will never be irrelevant if the same goal is being pursued as it was through the 2000 years of our history. We have attended weekly Mass all our lives and were engaged in choir, youth groups and other events as teenagers. YET, it is only in adulthood and more so as we realised we needed to take our parental role seriously that we have embraced our faith and tradition to aid us in getting the souls of one another and our children to heaven. We now realise the importance of daily Mass for strengthening graces and hearing the Bible, adoration, daily family Rosary, Bible reading, learning the history of the Church and about the saints, reading the saints, Divine Office and Encyclicals of

Popes and making use of sacramentals. We have discovered the reverence in the Latin Mass and Ordinarate Mass that has been lost with the Novus Ordo Mass especially with its abuses, which demonstrate such horrid disobedience, allowing rampant use of extraordinary ministers, Mass said versus populus, reception of communion no longer on the tongue. So many priests on our travels, we saw giving the same general type of homily exhorting us to try be nicer to the people around us, adding in jokes as they are facing the people and no doubt become disconcerted at the faithful staring back disengaged. So many lonely priests in parishes largely devoid of children or even people in their 20s, 30s or 40s. Except in a few parishes, often where Perpetual Adoration was offered and where extra devotions and frequent daily Mass and confession were offered; and at Latin Mass parishes the country over. The mainstream Catholic Church in Australia could hardly do worse than we are now. BRAVE UP AND SPEAK THE TRUTH and expect reverence and modesty.

This response is submitted by the members of the [-], the local (Australian) members of the [-], which has its Secretariat in Rome and undertakes its works of faith across the world with the formal approval of the appropriate Vatican Dicastery. Drawing on the expression of Divine Love shared by the members the Trinity, the operations of the group worldwide are directed to awakening and awareness of a communitarian spirituality—that spirit of love shared by God the father, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Fundamental to this process is spending time living (for short periods) together. Each of these gatherings is called a Convivenza, drawing on the work of Far Riccardo Lombardi, an Italian Jesuit, who at the time of the rise of Fascism, in the 1930s responded to the loss of community spirit suffered by the refugees when they fled south into Italy from Northern Europe to escape the terrible actions of the Nazis as they swept across those lands. In this contemporary era, we undertake an 'Itinerary' of the Communitarian Exercises together, which maintain the life of the spirit we go on to take away to our encounter with our activities in the wider Church, where we foster that shared spirit of God in other situations. There are 3 Itineraries of the Communitarian Exercises, which over the decades have been revised from time to time, to accommodate the era, for instance drawing on the illuminations of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the Reign of God, and the journey we undertake together in our ongoing experience of that life. Just as the St Ignatius developed his Spiritual Exercises promulgated by the Jesuit order, the Itineraries of the Communitarian Exercises, chart a way ahead for our own times, and our own lives as a community in the wider community of the Church and as well, in our lives in the broader communities we are part of. In our Retreats where we offer and experience the focus on Communitarian Spirituality, we focus on a process of 'inspiring'—where faith is ignited so to speak by the contributions of the whole group. In my case, as I witness the contributions of others, I am moved deeply by their experiences and see their lives (and my own) as a story of God with us. It is simultaneously humbling and uplifting.

My internal prayer life has served me well when adversity has struck. I can't say the same about my Church life except that by playing music and singing hymns my faith is strengthened and rewarding. I rely a lot on blogs by spiritual directors and Madonna magazine. I find it hard to keep my adult children interested in their faith: one relies on science, another has her children at a Catholic school and is married to an agnostic, the other 2 are not church-going except at Easter and Christmas. One has a same sex friend. All the disappointments about Catholic clergy have

made fun of my faith journey really and reduced my credibility as a faith teacher of my children. The Church won't lose me but only because of my closeness with Jesus.

TESTIMONIAL NOTES:

- I trusted my family to the Lord, and I realised that I am already His.
- I have been with atheists and talking about God is awkward at the beginning, but after talking to them they have told me I look like I am in love. We have to trust that God put us where we are meant to be.
- A lady without religion agreed to pray the rosary with me on her last days of life. She was answering me in English. That deeply surprised me, as it seemed like she was Catholic at some point in her life.
- I didn't know how to pray and was just repeating the Our Father and Hail Mary, while my mother was suffering great pain in her final stage of cancer. I didn't know what else to do, how to help her. Before such desperation I asked God to take the pain away. From that moment her pain stopped, till the day God took her with him. It is important to teach how to pray.
- I came to Mass for the first time and was invited to an International Students meeting. I wouldn't have come back to Mass if that specific day wasn't that way. Free food and sharing in Christ in a moment of need. Now I take a little bit from my experience at church to my roommates.
- Sometimes I didn't want to stay to the International Students meeting because I was so busy, but I stayed anyway when being personally invited by the organisers, who even give me a plate of food.
- I'm helping an organization to take food and talk to a group of people in need. I asked a rough-looking man what did he like from there, what moves him to come back. He answered that he came because in here people look him in the eye, not over his shoulders. I realised that we are stealing the dignity of the people, sometimes without realising it.
- The most important thing is the family. If I had grown up in a family without God, how could I believe?

We had 5 kids. They all went to Catholic schools, got married and provided us with 13 grandchildren. Some of the parents and their children go to church on occasion, others are pretty slack and some grandchildren don't believe in God. The rot set in long ago. In the early days of the development of our parish, a couple who were much older than us, established as "over 50 family group" because of the problems they were having with kids and grandkids.

I am a product of a loving, Catholic family and attended Catholic schools for much of my education. From this basis, I was able to form my own views on my Catholicism and how it affects my life in everyday life. I am able to be a servant of God, but I expect that the clergy will be able to provide me with the guidance and support I need from a base of knowledge about my community and how it should function and from a base of knowledge about the Catholic and Christian life of the Church today.

I am a faith filled person and believe in the Catholic Church and the role of the Pope as our shepherd. I have been educated and worked in Catholic schools and currently work in the

Archdiocese of [-]. I have met many holy people and many broken people. Through these encounters I see and sometimes reflect the face of God. For this I am eternally grateful.

The humble faith, devotion and spiritual passion so evident among immigrants attending our churches is a wonder and joy. Praise God for this precious gift He has bestowed upon us.... without our migrant communities surely we would be mere dust by now. An enormous "thank you" to all our brothers and sisters helping with the settlement of refugees and migrants in our communities!

I am often asked why I stay in the Church. Here is just one reason: I was involved in planning for a large event for young people. We were preparing for Adoration and I was assigned seminarians to help. I also asked 2 girls (late high school) to carry the candles to lead the procession with the Blessed sacrament. When a bishop associated with the event (not the presiding bishop) heard about this, word came through that he said no girls were to be involved. I was heartbroken, furious, excluded, disempowered, etc. etc. Eventually, after he was contacted again, he relented. We could involve the girls as long as the seminarians didn't feel like they were in secondary roles. I have been a woman in the Church for 58 years. Oh, to feel like I was in a secondary role. Why were the seminarians more important? So what if they felt secondary? What does this say about seminary training? What does it say about the Church's attitude to women, or at least some bishops' attitude to women? At Adoration, many, many young women and men experienced something they were almost denied. Something as simple as girls having a place in a liturgical procession. Taking their rightful place and doing it beautifully. This happened only in the last couple of years. Women are still fighting to be seen, heard and allowed to live our baptism. On this occasion, I was able to advocate for women in the Church. That was a good reason to stay.

My experience of being in and then leading a lay led community has taught me much about what is possible. It has opened my eyes to new possibilities for parishes. My personal experience of doing and then help to lead Alpha programs has renewed my belief that ordinary Catholics can evangelise and that our churches can grow in numbers. I also have seen how young people and young couples and families can be drawn into the heart of the Church.

The teaching of the sacraments in primary school created a firm foundation for my ongoing faith.

I've recently been Confirmed after being baptised in the Catholic Church as an infant, and never receiving any further guidance in my faith as my parents were no longer practicing. It was quite difficult to me to figure out how to further my faith and become fully formed within the Church. Last year I finally found out about the RCIA and was able to complete the classes and finally have my Confirmation. All of my life I was in awe of religion and the religious, but being raised by parents who had become atheist long ago, and attending a Protestant high school, I felt that becoming Catholic was some unattainable goal for me—a club I could never be a part of. I tried to be involved with Protestant churches, but I found it very difficult to be involved in faith communities that based their entire faith on feelings and emotions, rather than on reasoning as well. I always felt like an outcast, attending these Protestant Churches full of wailing charismatics. When I started researching the Catholic Church more, I finally started to find the faith I had been searching for all of my life. There is great value in being part of a Church that has withstood the test of time. I was lucky enough to find a Catholic group at my University, and through this I was

able to meet many priests, brothers, and other religious people who have helped me to continue to grow in my faith. It was sad to me to realise that many people who have been Catholic their entire life have never really spoken with a priest... have never discussed theology with a member of Opus Dei... have never shared a meal with a Capuchin. So much good can come from sharing your faith with another, but I fear this is something often overlooked in the Catholic community.

Born and bred in a strong Church of England tradition, my faith was complemented and extended by the tradition of Roman Catholicism. I married a born-and-bred Catholic, and 'converted' just before we were married. Being involved in many parish activities in our new parish, with such a deeply-committed priest and parish community, my family and I formed many friendships and social connections, while continuing to grow our personal faith and spirituality. Our parish offers a diverse range of activities, to cater for myriad needs of our faith community, and beyond. Whenever possible, I offer an ecumenical and broader viewpoint to interactions within Catholic discussions and actions.

I have been blest to have met so many wonderful people who have revealed the face of God to me. These have not been people in leadership roles in the Church but one man in particular who had very severe physical disabilities who was such an inspirational person and who had incredible faith. Many strong faith-filled women including my paternal Grandmother who raised 10 children with very little money. Her faith in God and her closeness to the Mother of God saying the 15 decades of the Rosary each day was a great model for her children and grandchildren to follow. Living her faith through her generosity and unselfishness has been the legacy left to future generations. The Eucharist has played an important part in my life and somehow Jesus has always lead me to others also searching for a Christian community. My involvement in the [-] played a big part in my Christian formation as a young adult and my thirst for Social justice has continued. I studied Theology as a Mother of four young children at [-] in the late eighties where I was asked by a seminarian quite seriously (sadly) why I was studying Theology and if it was to be a priest's Housekeeper. Unfortunately I don't think the attitude to women in the Church has become any better in fact the current men being ordained appear to be even more conservative. I then completed a Graduate Diploma in Ministry at [-] Theology in 2002. It appears to me that almost in spite of not because of the current Church leadership God has provided faith-filled people around me to sustain my faith. I hope and pray that as a result of the Council we will see a renewed Church which will witness the life of Jesus and be a safe and supportive place for all.

People are longing to listen the real teaching of Our Catholic Faith, not to be endlessly flooded with the waffle talk by so called "sharing the opinion".

I want to say just one thing: memory, whether repressed or not, is not necessarily reliable. I am concerned by the cascading "me too" movement which applies also to the Church and the revelation of abuse. Clearly, many cases are grounded in undisputed fact. But, I am very much aware on a personal level of the existence of false memories, and the unswerving belief in these memories by those who hold them. It is a difficult problem, and just another complication to sorting out the mess.

Baptised Catholic, divorced, mother of teen daughters who refuse to go to Church, despite Catholic schooling! (What am I doing wrong?). Attended both state and Catholic schools.

Worshipped until teenager then thought the Church full of hypocrites and refused to go to Mass. Came back to the Church through Catholic marriage and sacraments of Baptism of Children— stayed and found support of Catholic women in my life to be inspirational. Prayed heavily to Mary our Mother and the Rosary and Hail, Holy, Queen have sustained me through the ups and downs of life—divorce, single motherhood, remarriage, annulment attempt. Love my faith, but feel we could be more welcoming to everyone and less judgemental. We need to be proud of what Australian Catholics have achieved for this nation and work to implement new avenues for the laity and especially women of the Church can lead.

Sadly, I have no good experience over the past 35 yrs when I converted to the Catholic faith. I've had to teach myself Catholic faith and morals because the majority of priests in Australia will not speak from the pulpit about abortion, euthanasia, artificial birth control, other life and death issues etc. I've had to read Church documents to gain the information that I should have heard from the pulpit.

Growing up a Catholic female, I could not reconcile the role of female leadership in the Church. This created a deep conflict within me and drew me towards secular environments and philosophy. To this day, I find this teaching problematic and cannot accept it. I challenge the Plenary Council team to take this matter seriously and thoroughly study the implications this teaching has on the wider society—how it continues to negatively affect 50% of the population. I grew up in a community that cared deeply about the music that was included in liturgy and that has affected me greatly. The developed a great sense of music appreciation and it allowed me to connect to God at a deep level. I urge this Plenary Council to consider the benefits of music education in our society and to find ways to integrate it into community. I mean meaningful music, performed by gifted musicians who instil great their passion and positively influence and engage young people calling them to serve others, and understand their gift is of sharing, of allowing others to connect with God.

I am a married 24 year old Catholic youth worker living in [-]. I grew up around my Catholic grandmother but didn't believe in God until I went to [-] in 2012. My life was changed by experiencing Jesus in Adoration of the Blessed sacrament, and I have been on a journey understanding and loving my Catholic faith since then. I've worked in parish youth and young adult ministry, vocations ministry and in school-based evangelisation ministries. I am now part of [-] in [-], and I believe it is pioneering a way of doing Church that is growing the Church in a way that I have not seen before. I know there are other communities and movements around the country that are also pioneering new ways of doing Church but are unable to receive the same legitimacy as a parish or receive significant support from the Archdiocese.

I converted about 25 years ago through my own journey and the help of a devoutly Catholic friend. Along the way, conservative faithful to the magisterium priests have been few. When I do come across one, it is rare and such a beautiful thing. Liberals within the Church have experimented with faith and morals and failed spectacularly. It's got to stop.

I converted to Catholicism when I was seeking a greater relationship with my God. I have met many wonderful clergy and lay people on my journey of 50 years. I have always sought guidance and connection within my parish and school involvement. I fear that we have momentarily lost

our way and it is God who calls us back to be faith filled people who will share the fruits of our labour in the future. I pray for the discernment of the bishops to bring this to fruition with the support of the laity in meaningful action.

My encounter with the team from MenAlive reawakened my faith in God. They share a simple message of God the father and show how it transforms lives.

I was brought up Catholic, it was my solace and the church building a place to go for renewal and acceptance. Now I find Christ is far removed from the Institution. When I go to church often I don't find God there. I am divorced so cannot be married in my Church but others who are far divorced from Catholicism can. How hypocritical is that!!!! My grandchild cannot be married in the Church—she is gay and not by her choosing. We supposedly welcome all people but we really don't. We are very selective in who is permitted at the Eucharistic table. My wish for the Catholic Church in the future is that all the good priests become militant and demand the changes everyone knows has to happen, the cardinals and bishops are all sacked for aiding and abetting the crime of child abuse and the Church becomes once again "our" Church. The leaders of the institution have done an abominable job of protecting our children and it needs to STOP NOW.

My faith in God has not diminished but my love of Church has long gone. I used to pride myself on being Catholic and now I am ashamed. I am completely and utterly broken. The hierarchy are even to this day not acknowledging the hurt of the abuse victims and the hurt of the lay people. What other "mother" would not be holding her children in her arms at this time in the church history. No, our priests can't even address the issue at Sunday Mass. Why is this? I am divorced and I have a gay granddaughter. Neither of us can be married in the Church yet we have done nothing wrong. The Church, by its own rules, would rather us live in "sin" than be happily married with the person we love. Again what type of mother wishes that on her children!!! I no longer contribute financially to my Church but give to other organisations. I still attend Sunday Eucharist because it is my community and my circle of friends. I have decided I cannot have a Catholic funeral as my association with my Church will end at my death. I have told my children I do not want to be seen dead in a Catholic Church although I have lived all my life as a Catholic sad as that is. Wake up you the leaders of the Church as you are ruining it for Christ's followers.

I am divorced. I have a gay granddaughter, and 10 other grandchildren. I have decided I don't want a Catholic funeral because my connection to the Church is at a community level only. I participate because it allows me to access a carer's group and social justice. Group. It saddens me but that is my protest.

I am a convert from Taoism and decided to become a Catholic after I was baptised in the Holy Spirit.

I went through 12 years of Catholic education only to leave not knowing a great deal about our faith other than what my parents taught me. It took me the courage to answer Gods call to further understand the faith through finding my own answers. I read a lot, spoke to practicing Catholics, found Catholic friends, prayed, started weekly Adoration, attended 2 world youth days and was a participant in the going Catholic women's interfaith fellowship. I also completed a

masters in theology. All these things led me to grow deeper in love with Jesus, to love our Church and to work towards helping children and teachers to know and love our Lord.

I am a choir master of a Family Choir at our parish. The choir caters for all ages and we have 4 teenagers in guitar, two adults on guitar, a 9 year old boy and an adult on their Tjembe drums and an adult on the piano. The music we play have a theme of joy and worship. I get feedback so often—why do we not play more in Church? Why can all Masses not have this music? I get this feedback from young and old. I really think Gather Australia was part of an era which has served its purpose and the role of music in the Church needs to be seriously re-assessed. But this needs to be done with humility and obedience to the Holy Spirit. I am willing to be part of this process and make a contribution as best I can. I have been playing at Mass for at least 30 years.

I will share a story regarding the need for proper Catholic education for the sake of all Australians' moral and intellectual formation—not just Catholics. As Catholics, our philosophy is founded on the Natural Law. Our theology builds upon this solid foundation that we should be given in all things natural. I went as a guest speaker to a youth group to explain the Catholic perspective on same-sex attraction, gay marriage, and gender fluidity/transgenderism. While almost all of the group of +/- 30 teenagers attended Catholic school, almost half of them supported gay marriage and transgenderism before the talk. During the talk I explained to them step-by-step the Aristotelean concept of telos, and of the Catholic definition of love (willing what is best for the other), and why we have that definition. I also outlined how objective morality makes more sense the emotionalism, subjectivism and relativism. It took me an hour and all those who disagreed with me at the beginning of the talk had changed their minds. Yet, almost no Catholic School teacher was taught Aquinas or Aristotle during their teaching degree. This is a large reason why Catholics are so morally and philosophically vacuous. It is really not so hard to change this. Perhaps it is worth Catholic Schools getting rid of some government funding, sacrificing their high-tech computer labs, and replacing them with robust classroom discussion that actually teaches them how to think about themselves and the world around them in a Catholic, i.e. true, good and beautiful, way!

I grew up Catholic, going to Catholic schools and children's Church on a Sunday morning. When I reached high school I began attending charismatic Catholic youth conferences and camps. These mountain top experiences were fantastic for solidifying my faith throughout my high school years. Unfortunately, these communities that form from these experiences had the opposite effect on my faith after leaving school. As I was tipped out of the fishbowl that I had lived, breathed and worshipped through high school I came to know there were more ways to be Catholic than just one, and each different person journey equals a different relationship with God and therefore a different expression of faith. I found it really hard to understand and navigate these 'different' Catholics when everything I had known about being Catholic was black and white. Unfortunately, this made me a worse Catholic, as I stood and judged another's heart, soul and faith. This is why I am so passionate about the Church taking a more conscious movement into embracing everyone's way of loving God and not just the 'black and white' of so many Catholic communities.

Fr [-] at [-], [-], has a meaningful approach to liturgy that doesn't include constantly crying babies, and does include well-chosen and well prepared musical offerings, Masses which begin

and end on time, and best of all Masses which contain carefully crafted sermons that really make people of all ages think, and that are not patronising, patriarchal, or meandering!

I have had the honour and pleasure of working in Catholic Education for the past 20 years in the [-] and [-] Diocese. Over this time, I have been involved in developing many instrumental music programs in Catholic Schools and witnessing the difference this makes in the climate and community of a parish. The most memorable experience I can communicate is the development of the [-] Program. As Music Coordinator at The [-] College, I liaised with our parish feeder schools and implemented a band and orchestral string program in 2007 where we gave tuition to all Year 5 students. This program led to the development of a music program that boasted over 500 students across four schools, with students engaging in music ministry across the parish and contributing to the music of the Cathedral. It was through music that we were able to evangelise these students and engage them regularly through the ritual of the Church. Currently, I am the proud Music Director of [-], and Artistic Director of the [-] Festival. I have the wonderful opportunity to witness the teaching that is occurring in many Catholic schools from across [-] and Australia. It is heartening to see so many students (approximately 15,600 student performances at [-] 2018) engaged in music activities. [-] is the flagship opportunity to gather as a community and celebrate music education. It is through this event that I find hope; it is through this event that we are trying to foster community. We host ensembles from approximately 108 schools each year; this is approximately 1/3 of Catholic Schools from across our state. 2/3 of schools are not engaging with [-] or do not have an ensemble or choir to send. 2/3 of students in our schools are missing out on the sense of community and evangelisation that comes through music ministry. Due to the relationship between music and ritual in the Church, I fear this is a great oversight of those directing our schools.

I grew up as a Catholic ...went to [-] but like my peers had a very nominal faith. I went to Uni and quickly became a militant atheist. About 15 years later I had a Damascus road conversion where I had an unsought encounter with the Risen Lord. I became a believer in about three nano seconds. We (wife as well) returned to the Church and joined [-]. I returned to teaching after some period away and was employed by Cath Ed. This was quite a shock as the last time I had been in a Catholic school was when I was a student myself. I was shocked by the LACK OF FAITH. When I was at school even the bad kids believed. Now even the good kids were unbelievers. I began praying and crying out to God in earnest that these kids could be reached with the truth of the gospel. At one school I taught at the RE coordinator didn't believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus!!! She thought that the bones of Jesus were still lying somewhere in the Middle East. Can you imagine the faith education that the kids were getting? Anyhow long story short, I began corresponding with [-] [program] in America, went over to have a look, was totally impressed and brought it back to Australia. That was about thirty years ago and 500,000 retreatants later.

I grew up in the eastern suburbs of [-], now residing in [-] for the past 5 years. I am 30 years old and have had 15 years' experience in youth ministry, most recently with [-] Ministries, 2 years as volunteer and 3 years serving on staff. I have an industrial design background and specialise in design and product solutions. I have had a positive experience of the Church and enjoy the expression of the Charismatic renewal, the ministry of which has given me a lot a healing a resolve

to my personal character and identity in the Church. I look forward to the developments of this Council and a renewed Church of opportunity.

I am very grateful for early formation experiences, however, we need to move past a perpetual state of adolescence in our faith. In other words, to commit adulthood.

In our parish leading up to and including the year of the Great Jubilee many events were held, including a mission, to celebrate these important years. The older parishioners were the driving force behind all the events and the overall feeling was one of community, sharing and supporting each other on our journey to the year 2000. Some people even encouraged others who had not visited a church in some time to come along and as a result there were many positive outcomes. I feel we are being called to provide a group within our church for members, maybe 50 years and older, to come together, firstly as a social group to share, support and help each other. From this can come prayer groups, support for other areas such as SVDP, visiting the sick, inviting the lonely to join in, helping in areas such as baptism preparation and so much more. It is always difficult to get people involved and to volunteer but once in a group help is often more forthcoming. I also think that it would be a wonderful way to invite some who have not practised their faith for some time to come back to the Church, especially if it is a social setting. Many of my friends regularly went to church when their children were at school but since they are no longer at home the parents have slowly slipped away from going to church. A social group would be a way of inviting them back. Also as we enter the latter part of our life's journey people think more about their faith and the relationship they have with Jesus. The journey to Emmaus, when the 2 apostles met Jesus is a wonderful analogy of our earthly lives and how it is the perfect time to grow closer to the Lord. Older parishioners have so much life experience, wisdom, patience and so much more that they can offer and share with each other and the younger members of their Church community. It is sad to see it not used to its full potential.

Through meeting families in our children's schools and our parish, we have started small family groups to support each other in the Faith, provide catechesis to the children, give practical assistance (cooking meals when others are sick for example), have a laugh. Share our joys and sorrows.

I came to my current parish ([-], [-]) about 8–9 years ago. I had persisted in my local parish for 10 years and was losing my Catholicity, I was ready to give up practicing. At my new parish I found a new understanding of the Body of Christ. Pope Francis helped, and Peter Quin and the Jesuits showed me a bit more. I personally bet that the Body of Christ is the greatest gift that the Catholic Church has to offer and we shouldn't be stingy with it. We should be generous with it and trust its power to work in those who seek it. (Read: divorced people need it, let them in, don't withhold it).

I spoke about my experiences in the previous questions, but the annual retreats with the teenager groups were very important to make me feel closer to God, to experience His love, deepen my faith, make me know more about the Catholic faith/Church, feel useful (as in helping to bring more teenagers to learn more about God) and gave me friendships that survived the time (more than 30 years) and the distance (my friends are still in Brazil). I strongly believe that it is important to make youth enjoy to be involved with the Church. Continuity is vital (we cannot leave a gap, there must be offerings of groups to cater for different ages). They need to listen/learn but also

have the time to discuss and talk about their findings/conclusions/understanding. They need to feel that they can be heard too and feel that they also have a role, that they contribute to the group and their participation helps the group to grow and get stronger. To make that happen, of course, we need to have a strong and committed group of adults willing to work with the youth. It used to be the married couples involved in the couples group that would coordinate the work with the youth. We had more than 20 couples involved in the annual teenagers retreat (each couple would coordinate a team of teenagers, responsible for different tasks: band, presenters, small groups facilitators—for small groups discussions, food/kitchen, cleaning, welcoming, entertainment, office/admin, photography, waiters/waitress (to serve the food), etc. It was a lot of work but always paid off, we always felt renewed, joyous and with a stronger faith after those retreats.

My life in Australia has changed dramatically after I joined the Catholic [-] Community. The Church activities maintain us closer to God, strengthening my faith and values, and enables me to keep strong, even being far away from my family.

When we arrived in Australia 12 years ago, we had a lot of luck meeting Father [-] who is with the [-] community ever since. Thanks to him today our community is growing.

I am a young (19 year old) seminarian for the diocese of Townsville and I feel a big reason that I have a relationship with the Church and with Christ is World Youth Day, particularly when it was hosted in Sydney. While I did not go to that event (I was only 8), I feel that was a major turning point in my life and especially my life of faith as I saw the energy and excitement that the Catholic faith could inspire, and in seeing this, coupled with a natural curiosity, I was inspired by God and God's Church. It was not a particular person or celebration that transformed my life, it was the recognition (in my own, 8 year old way), that this was a communion built by God and for God.

I love my faith and love being Catholic. During my final years of high school I attended a Baptist youth group which was amazing, I went there because there was no youth group at my parish and I wanted to connect with like-minded people. This youth group taught me so much about Christ and just faith in general. In year 12, as a favour to a friend, I went to a Catholic youth group. The youth coordinator there was truly dynamic and helped me to see the beautiful in the Catholic Church (I struggled to see it at the time). This youth minister helped me to understand the beauty of Mary, he introduced me to Christ in the Eucharist and help me see the transformative nature of it in the Mass and adoration. He made the Catholic faith relevant to my life!! I believe the Church needs more faithful, devout, well-formed workers in ministry roles. I often feel disheartened as I see many people involved in parishes who don't truly understand who Christ is or the true beauty and richness of our Church. I think there are many reasons for this, lack of formation, lack of funding for properly qualified people, lack of hours etc. I see this particularly with youth ministry—many youth ministers seem to do youth ministry for a season but when they start a family they move on as financially it is not realistic to live on a youth minister's wage, most youth ministry positions are only part time as well. I would love to see Archdiocesan offices across Australia supporting adults and young adults in formation of our faith and providing dynamic training and experiences for all.

The experience of prayer teams at an Ignite Conference was not only a confronting experience but an emotional one in which I became fully aware of the love that God has for me and the purpose he has given things in my life.

The Knights of the Southern Cross hold an annual National Prayer Crusade and this year was the 12th Crusade which was well supported in [-]. From our Catholic schools in the [-] Diocese, 21 schools participated in the prayer crusade. This amounted to 8276 students. 265 staff who indicated their desire to participate which was great given that the information that went around did not specifically request staff to nominate. This was a wonderful result as the best we could achieve in the past was around 1500 participants. All Catholic Organisations and individual Catholics throughout Australia are invited to join us to pray for an increase in the number of Catholics willing to serve the Church in the priesthood, diaconate and religious life (including service as Catholic Chaplains in the Australian Military Services). The Prayer Crusade runs from the 2 Sept – 24 Nov 2018 (12 Weeks). In relation to Catholic Chaplains, 3 priests have become chaplains in 2017 and 3 have also completed their term of duty. 1 candidate is currently in training to become a chaplain as a permanent deacon and 1 ADF member is expected to begin training as a permanent deacon this year. An example of the power of prayer.

I had a lovely experience in a Catholic primary school in [-] [-] (postcode [-]). At the primary school they made faith relevant to a child and taught me how to be a good Catholic person. Values I try to live by each and every day. My primary school was supported by a lovely parish and priest who embraced the school and supported them at every opportunity to make faith relevant to the children. As a student we had great respect for the priest who could engage with us and was approachable. This was supported by my Catholic high school education which supported woman to go out and be successful Catholic woman and instil their values in all their endeavours. With such a positive experience, I enrolled my children at a local Catholic school in [-] [-]. The small Catholic School has been amazing. Each and every day they make faith and Catholic values relevant for the children. They do so in a creative and exciting manner and make it relevant to the children in this generation. Each staff member lives the Catholic values and passes these onto the children. The disappointing thing is the lack of support from the Church. While some individuals (lay woman) try to engage, the actions and lack of support from the newish priest has turned many families away from the Church. This is in stark contrast to the previous long serving priest who fostered and understood the important of the Catholic school in aspiring Catholics of the future. As a result there are very, very few families from the school who attend Mass—most of the practicing Catholics families have changed parishes to those with different attitudes (or not attending Mass anymore). Examples include, priest refusing to liaise with the P&F (he advised that all correspondence must go through the school—how is that like Jesus who welcomed anyone with open arms?), not allowing students of the school to prepare for sacraments (first communion, reconciliation) at the Church if they did not live in the area (which resulted in half of the contingent of the grade doing communion in another parish which welcomed them with open arms), the priest has veto on all decision relating to the school property and makes it very difficult for decisions relating to the school infrastructure to be made. The priest should not be involved in decisions of the school that do not relate to theology and faith. My final comments relate to the response of the Church in Australian ([-] and [-] diocese) to Cardinal Pell's Conviction. (he should

not be a cardinal) While I understand there is an appeal process, the fact is that the highest ranking Australian Catholic was convicted of atrocious crimes. The Archdiocese response—to direct schools not to talk about unless needed—is atrocious! The Church needs to be on the front foot to reassure Catholics of the safeguards in place to prevent this from happening and not tarnish all the wonderful things that other Catholics are doing.

I recently lost my dearly loved mother after a very long illness. This has been a very difficult time for me personally but the Church has given me assurance and peace in the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, comfort in the care and compassion of the parishioners of my local parish. The faith that my Mother gave me and cultivated in me has given me peace at this terrible time that I don't know how I'd have faced otherwise.

I will share the ACBC's own data that shows most Catholics do not even keep the first precept of the Church. See attached submission.

Coming from a country town with a very traditional faith experience this gave me great confidence in my faith. I love my Church. Over the last 20 years I have struggled with understanding what the current Church model has to do with the Gospel. Leadership in the current Church has not kept up with the change and culture and has become more then irrelevant it has died in the hearts of many Catholic people, families and communities. In many ways I am disappointed with the Church and its leadership and how it treats the priests and people.

Being able to meet, befriend and form close relationships with the seminarians at my university has helped me immensely in my faith journey and in my personal life. They were authentic examples of young people courageously and passionately living out God's plan for their lives. It made me want that too. It reignited a spark for me and also woke me up to my spirit of sloth propelling me to take action. They journeyed with me when I felt alone, encouraged me when I struggled, showed me kindness and generosity that didn't ask for anything in return and through being my brothers their care of and for me showed me what Godly men look like and that they did exist. This transformed my view on men and relationships and strengthened my resolve to wait for God's best for me rather than the world's best for me with regards to a husband. Simultaneously they inspired me to consider what my calling was and to question whether it was married life or religious life. The Opus Dei community are great in demonstrating and revealing that holiness can be found and attained in the ordinary. For someone who struggled to be holy and to see the practical side of faith it was transformational in changing my viewpoints and how I saw my journey/path to holiness. Everyone should have a Spiritual Director! Mine has been incredible. She has helped me to discover things about myself, guided me to learn more about myself and be better attuned to my inner voice and God's voice. Been a "Catholic" (albeit a cultural one) for years and only just discovered that was a thing a year ago! More people need to know about Spiritual Directors and there may need to be more Spiritual Directors. Confession is very underrated. I asked a whole congregation "Raise your hand if you go to Confession" and only 3 people in a room of approx. 50+ raised their hand and one of them was a religious! The sacrament of Reconciliation transformed my life, setting me free from shame, hurt and denial and it saddens me that not more people, especially Catholics, are partaking in this.

Well unfortunately the Church in Australia is too hard to connect, I'm from Brazil and I feel I'm not welcome in the Church, maybe is about culture or maybe because I'm young and the most of the church that I go I just see older people. Also the most of the time the church is closed. In Brazil where is knowing about violence and robbery, the church is open all day, you can go and pray in your lunch time, you can go and pray before or after your work, here in Gold Coast I don't have the chance to participate in a daily Mass, we don't have many choices of time. Anyway maybe is about culture, but I strongly believe that the church should be open often. Thank you again for asking and hearing us. God bless you!

Working as a campus missionary with [-] for the last four years (and counting), my heart for ministry is to build authentic, bold and selfless disciples who know and want to share the love of Christ. I have seen a lot of brokenness in my time on the mission field—but I have also seen much healing and much fruit come out of university ministry and I think a lot of that has been my formation through my youth group, life as a missionary and spiritual direction. I have a soft spot for parish-based youth ministry. This is where my faith was formed as a youth, and where it was then really fostered as a youth leader. My youth group was my first taste of community life in a parish—I had not experienced community and fellowship in such a tangible way prior to this. Our weekly meetings were centred in prayer and formation—which I now find is the key to true fellowship within the Church, where brothers and sisters can come together and encourage one another in the marathon to heaven. World Youth Day has also played a big part in my faith—having been to three (Sydney '08, Madrid '11, Rio de Janeiro '13) and having such different experiences at each one as my faith grew, they served as great little boosts along the journey. It was through these WYD experiences that my understanding of the universal 'Catholic' Church really took root. In particular, spending time in Chile prior to WYD Rio, I really got to understand the true meaning of mission: to live lives that witness to the Truth, Beauty and Goodness of God and of His Church. Being in mission for some time now, I have realised just how intertwined holiness and mission are. One cannot exist without the other—they are both inevitable causes and fruits of the other. Of course, I have also been blessed enough to have such great role models and mentors in my life who have encouraged and challenged me in my holiness. From my youth group leaders, to my team in my first year of mission, to man men and women faithfully living out their vocations, to my fiery yet gentle spiritual director, to my family who were my first domestic Church—we need more holy men and women to be bold and authentic witnesses to the Catholic Church. I have seen and heard from so many students who have been inspired and challenged to holiness by the witness of other people who are simply striving to be saints themselves. We need people who love and will defend the Church and Her teachings; who keep Our Blessed Mother close; who look to the Saints and the giants whose shoulders we stand on; who are equipped and proficient in pointing others to Christ; and who know how to love deeply and well.

I describe myself as a committed Christian of the Catholic tradition and I plan to stay in the Church and work for reform from the inside, because that's what I believe I was called to 38 years ago at Explo 80 Christian Youth Conference, where I made a renewed commitment to entrust my life to Jesus. I thought of leaving the Catholic Church at that stage, but was convicted of the need to stay. Soon after, I was led to a Catholic Renewal Community and did a Life in the Spirit Seminar,

after which I was definitely convinced I should stick with Catholicism and work on converting others to a Spirit-led life, so that the Church might be renewed from within, one person at a time.

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

I am an RCIA convert. Since 2012 my faith in the institutional Church has almost all but evaporated. My faith in the Body of Christ remains.

One of our members shared a story of how she was confronted daily in her job as a teacher in a public school with the total absence of God or Christian symbolism. Someone else was confronted daily in university with an atheist environment and a mentality of making money and living for the moment. Another group member shared how they entered the Church after years of being outside experiencing dissatisfaction with the unrestricted freedom they had. Someone else shared the pain of growing up with parents addicted to drugs whilst another said that being born in the Way helped them have an answer in front of the suffering. A person said they received many graces through the World Youth Day slowly overcoming many fears about life whilst a young man expressed the rebellion he went through when asked to do Sunday Lauds but that with time all this was changed to blessing once he looked back.

We all have stories of times we have been hurt by people within the Church. In many cases, this is one of our greatest motivations for living a Church that is not so hurtful to its members. Gathering together, we know Christ is in our midst and, while we are still at least a little scared, we have a certain hope and energy which we name as the Holy Spirit working in us for a Church that is as young and vibrant as the Spirit that we feel.

Three years of formation in a seminary was a blessing, but just as blessed was a year in a community living with people who were poor and marginalised in inner Sydney. The community was led by religious sisters and lay people. The community was centred on prayer and house Masses. I have often wondered if this type of experience would be a good way of inviting young people into service and ministry—a way of Gospel formation. I suspect this may be what NET Ministries already does in forming young people for active lives in the Church. It would be good if this could be more widely offered around parishes and dioceses—priests and religious living with communities of young people who were there for a year, two, three—living faith communities?

My parents were Catholic converts and strong in faith. We came to Australia in 1968. I was enrolled in a Catholic primary school in [-] where I was, right from the start at the age of seven, continually physically and emotionally abused by teachers. I seemed to be constantly caned and shamed in front of the entire school cohort for such minor things as writing my own "notes" in my autograph book and sent around to every classroom to be ridiculed. On this occasion, I remember kneeling in the gravel as a little child crying because I was so scared and praying the hail Mary before going into a classroom. This treatment was all a huge shock because I had attended a Catholic school in England where I experienced quite the opposite and caning was used rarely and

in my child's memory only once for really big stuff (kicking a hole in the school brick wall). My experience of Church in these early formative years have had a huge effect on me for my entire life. I came to this realisation (where my fear and anxiety had come from) when I remembered an incident in year four where holy pictures were given out and in tears I had handed mine back because I felt I was not good enough to receive one! I had internalised some very destructive messages. Thank God I had a loving and supporting family, and now an amazing faith-filled husband who inspires me and have experienced some very nurturing, loving, faith filled and inspiring people in my adult life and especially in my current parish! My parish of [-] [-] is a wonderful example of living the Gospel! Thankfully now schools have changed. Now I believe we as the greater Church are being called to great change if we are to be credible witnesses and go out to others and spread the Good News of Jesus! We must do everything we can to protect our most vulnerable and not just play lip service.

- Lay community groups, like CFC, operate using donations only. We find ourselves having to pay to use Church facilities to do our evangelisation work.

- Teachers in Catholic schools are not all Catholics.

- Catholic schools are discussing religions other than Catholicism.

- Catholic schools are only teaching values, not religion or the Catholic faith. Schools should discuss where these values come from.

The [-] community was an oasis when I first arrived in Australia, we should stimulate international communities to welcome their own, but at same point integrate them to the whole Australian Catholic community.

We asked 500 Catholic school students, many of who are unchurched, what their experience of the Church is. Almost every student responded with loved, welcomed and accepted. These students are from a rural setting so are sheltered from the media and other people's perceptions of the Church. This response is a testament to their parish priest and community.

If it wasn't for the Latin Mass I would still be an Atheist. If you really want the youth of today to come back to The Church in droves then remove the soul-destroying fifty shades of grey in their life by giving them the black and white freedom of the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church.

Yes, I have attended both more traditional Masses and also Masses where there has been very little reverence towards Our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. If we are to be a Eucharistic, Easter people, we need to revisit the way in which we treat the Eucharist at each parish. If we treat Our Lord as He really is, that is the King and Centre of all hearts Who is really and truly present on our altars after each Consecration, we will have a renewal of the Church. More and more young people are flocking to churches where love, reverence and adoration of Jesus is evident in the Masses and where Eucharistic Adoration takes places. Some of the less reverent Masses I have participated in and the lack of respect for Jesus in the outward styles of some priests leaves me with no doubt about this.

Thank God my parents gave me my faith. Catholic school didn't help much. When I was 18 I decided to start learning my faith. My local Church is cold with a radical priest. Very few couples,

<p>man and woman come to Mass there and numbers are declining. WYD helped my faith. Legion of Mary helped also, selfless service to the parish priest. A proven model for lay involvement.</p>
<p>I was brought up in a faith filled family, attended Catholic schools and went onto work in that environment. I was so dedicated to my faith and to sharing my knowledge with others that I sold my home to finance my theological studies overseas. On my return to [-], I was appointed to an adult faith education role which I carried out successfully for 15 years, until one day I was summonsed to a meeting where I was told my position was no longer available. I had to be out of the building by close of business on Friday of that week. To say I was shattered is an understatement. I'm afraid I've found it very difficult to have any faith in a Church that treats a long serving, faithful member in such an appalling way.</p>
<p>I believe that Jesus is the son of God and His message comes first above all other messages—I attend Mass as often as I can usually twice a week and have a God centred life with my husband. My faith in Jesus has not been damaged by the Church disasters worldwide because I believe in the real message of Jesus's life on earth as an example which isn't followed by majority of Church leaders.</p>
<p>Briefly, it has been a long journey of personal growth and study. In recent years I acquired a PhD on the life and writings of St Therese of Lisieux. Maybe her message to us today is to a renewal in the faith in the Risen Christ.</p>
<p>Our Lady leads us to Jesus. She is a powerful intercessor. Remain faithful to the teaching of the Catholic faith. Do not water it down. Jesus is truly present in the consecrated host. A priest carrying Our Lord in the Monstrance was blessing us. He was walking down the aisle in the Church. He was approaching me. I was so ecstatic that our Lord was so near to me that Jesus pierced my heart with joy, not of this world. Reinforce the true presence in the Eucharist. Also that sin takes us further away from God.</p>
<p>Narcissistic, introverted, arrogant and power/money seeking. Traditional to a fault in a fast changing world. Rapidly becoming irrelevant.</p>
<p>I think the biggest impact on shaping the person I am today isn't the Church necessarily; it was the Catholic high school I went to.</p>
<p>I used to ride my bicycle to Mass just about every morning before school and loved it. ([-]) Mum and I always went to Novena and to Benediction as well as Sunday Mass. The priest was very supportive of us (Dad was dying—took 8 years, tuberculosis) and the priest rode his bicycle up to visit Dad every week. He arranged for Mum to take time out to join the ladies at the Catholic Women's Tennis while he sat with Dad until she got home. (Fr [-]). Fr [-] took over from him when Fr [-] was transferred. The priests visited most of their parishioners in those days even on push bikes.</p>
<p>I was well tutored in the Latin Mass; Gregorian Chant; Sung Mass etc. When Vatican II came I was young enough to accept the changes made. This time things have gone step too far.</p>
<p>I have been attending the Awaken group at the [-] Church in [-] [-] Australia. The woman leading the healing group named [-] is a tremendously gifted healer and is helping 100s of people. This rare person should be able to aspire to the highest levels of Church hierarchy. She has helped</p>

me more in a few weeks than anyone I can recall in the Catholic Church, with actual healing and inspiration direct from the Holy Spirit.

Yes, we had a wonderful Pastoral Leader, an Ursuline sister, who lead our parish for many years assisted with visiting priests and she was a wonderful figure in our parish, she was so involved in every aspect of parish life, so much so she became a great FRIEND and inspiration to many—being involved in every aspect as a leader or creating opportunities for people to be involved is essential. We need more people like this perhaps it is time to create a bigger role for women in the Church? Also, recently I had the opportunity to attend a retreat day with another wonderful leader and founder of Missionaries of God's Love (MGL) and his passion in evangelisation and spiritual renewal is definitely something we need more of. We need leaders that connect with the world and can help us to understand how God is the centre to all. Good Leaders, both male and female! Participation has helped me gain a better understanding of being ALIVE in the Church. This is something that should be encouraged always and offered to ALL, not a chosen few.

I am a Catholic. I did not attend Mass for ten years from my mid-twenties. I married a practicing Catholic in the early eighties and took up the faith once more. I was astounded at how more simple and loving the Church had become. When I went to Catholic schools, the faith was based on fear and retribution. Now, (in the eighties) it was based on Gods' love and mercy. Since then, the progress of Vatican II, has been gradually eroded by the conservatives (both clergy and laity) and people have been disillusioned and voted with their feet (by leaving in droves).

1. Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God.
2. Transparency.
3. Use Jesus as our example for everyday life.

We used to feel a lot of comfort in the Church as a family. We feel conflicted by the constant messages of uncovered abuse. It's just not acceptable. Something has to be done to open up dialogue and genuinely change the 'brush it under the carpet' approach. Our Church has also become a forum for old domineering ladies to sing badly in a 'band'. Bands were certainly never part of the traditional Catholic Church, maybe a Choir, but certainly not a band. If you genuinely want people to attend, make it a spiritual, calm connection that is welcoming and not just to please a few who manage to attend every single Mass. It has certainly turned us and other families away from the Church. Involve the children, let it be a peaceful, family place. Faith has always been somewhere we turned for peace, comfort and grief. Our opinions have changed due to the cloak the Catholic Church has held over itself in past years in an attempt to mask the atrocities of abuse. Whatever happened to Sunday school for the kids?? A fun session with simple Bible stories, that mums and dads would assist with. Kids can't sit through an hour Mass, whisper quiet. I think the point I'm trying to make is that it no longer feels like a welcoming, safe place. It feels like a gathering of the elderly, for the elderly, deeply entrenched in awful, awful issues.

I would like to share a positive story. I grew up in an Italian family and attended Catholic schools, including a Christian Brother's school. I was always taught to have strong faith in God, not to judge others, and to demonstrate my values through my actions. I was also taught that it was healthy to question my faith. These teachings have assisted me to remain fervent in my beliefs, even when they could have been shattered by the actions of others, whether towards me or even with larger

issues such as child sexual abuse. I know I am repeating myself, but I believe that it is only through our actions that we can effectively evangelise. The Plenary Council needs to consider how we encourage more of this behaviour and ensure that those in positions of authority lead by example.

Alpha is the most fruitful thing in the Church and my life.

A simple act of a priest coming to our holiday home with communion after I had been ill in church and left early to avoid passing out during Mass. I was not a normal part of that parish but on holidays. A small gesture but he put himself out knowing he would be late for the next Mass. An education officer who is so enthusiastic about her faith that she is encouraging me to learn more even at a later age in life without being overpowering. Perhaps this is because I have more time now to do so.

I consider that I'm fortunate to have been brought up within a caring and loving Catholic family within a Catholic community and educated by Catholic nuns. I remain a regular church-goer and a defender of the faith. This is despite the revelations of disgraceful individual and systemic behaviour within the Church.

I still see our Church as being the true home for a Christian believer as Christ promised to be with us until the end of time not just until the Reformation. The sexual abuse scandal has led me to believe, however, that there is need for another reformation. I refer to the reforming of our Church from within guided by the Holy Spirit for the greater glory of our Lord and Saviour. I have seen over the years entrenched clericalism from the very same people that claim to be repulsed by it. I challenge the bishops of our Church in Australia to imagine wearing the ornate robes and signs of high clerical office in front of Jesus. Can you truly imagine allowing someone to introduce you to our Saviour as, "His Grace, the Archbishop of ...". I have seen others that truly are the humble descendants of the apostles witnessing to the world of the saving power of our Lord Jesus Christ. This humble route needs to be the future of our Church if it is to be a growing body that is the living embodiment the mission demanded of us by God.

The Church's reputation has become so embarrassing that many believers are making the relationship with God a more personal belief and not necessarily following Church rules. While I have a very 'Holy' patient and forgiving priest I am happy to regularly attend Mass. This may change.

I gave 15 years of my life sharing my gifts as a music minister every Sunday in several parishes. I studied theology, liturgy, and of course music, teaching others about the role of liturgical music, all the time working to ensure that our local parish liturgies were alive, energy-filled, contemplative, pastorally-aware, and deeply connected to the Word of God. But in the end, that wasn't enough. My children don't go to Mass, not because the music isn't great (it is) but because the priest has no interest or motivation in breaking open that Word to them, no idea how to even speak on a level they can comprehend, let alone find meaning in. This man is ill, should have retired. Where is the dynamic, passionate leader who can guide them through their questions? The obvious candidate is a deacon: but because he's married, he's not allowed to preach, not allowed to reach into the great potential of his dreams and my son's hearts. I feel betrayed by the Church, which has openly welcomed my ministry as a "wonderful evangelisation", yet ignores the countless wise men AND WOMEN who wish to serve as leaders. Remember that story of the man

in the flood? His neighbour comes to warn him, offering a ride out of danger, but he refuses saying "God will rescue me". The water rises and the SES comes with a boat. "No thanks, God will rescue me," says the man. The water reaches ever higher and the man must climb onto the roof. The army sends a helicopter to hover over the house. "It's ok, God will save me!" calls the man. But of course the water continues to rise and the man drowns. When he gets to heaven, he is indignant. "You said I just had to have faith and you would rescue me!" he yells at God. "But my son," says the Father, "I sent a car, a boat and a helicopter and you rejected all of them." In the same way, the Church is under siege. It laments "We have no priests, no suitable people to lead, vocations have dropped". And my elderly father, after giving over his whole life to serving others, always blind and now hard of hearing must struggle to understand the impenetrable accent of the priest from Tanzania. This young man has been imported to serve in a cultural context he can never be expected to understand fully, and leaves his own community bereft of good leaders of their own. But we have perfectly good Australians longing to become priests. They just happen to be married men, or they are women. I am sick of my beloved Mass being impoverished by priests who know less about Liturgy than I do (and that is not much), who won't meet my eye as they offer me the blessed host, who hide behind a wall of indecipherable words, who rush off as quickly as possible afterwards, and who are too broken to be interested in the people of their own community.

I am a bisexual divorced mother of two Catholic boys. I work hard on maintaining a loving home environment (as does my Christian ex-husband). My boys are making their sacraments, we go to Church, we pray every day, we love one another and we believe in a loving God who loves us just the way we are. We have gay family friends and we voted as a family for same sex marriage, we have respect for the role of a priest and know that a woman can do the same job any man can do in that role, we value family and know priests should be able to marry and have a family. When I go to Church I take communion. I refuse to accept that God doesn't love me or want me to be closer to him just because I am bisexual or divorced. He loves me as I love him. I stand up for God and for love every day. The Church cannot stop me from having faith, feeling and believing in the Lord. On a side note, on registering my son for his confirmation, there were ridiculous barriers put in place that contributed to a number of boys not completing their confirmation. We had to find a form on a poorly designed website, print the form (when no one has printers any more), get both parents to sign the form (when only one parent may be Catholic or even be in the same town), pay money in cash (when no one uses cash any more), turn up at a 2 hour time block at the parish (with no exceptions if you couldn't attend at that time slot resulting in your son having to wait until next year or be turned away all together). For people who have faith and want to be a part of it—make it easier!

I have had many experiences through my faith I don't think it was dependent on being the "Church in Australia". But my mother died a number of years ago around Easter. She had suffered greatly throughout the last 9 years of her life and the priest at her funeral related her struggle to the Lenten struggle and her death to the "resurrection" and yes I believe she her faith and struggle did allow her to rise up to be with her heavenly father. It was very poignant. Secondly, we found out not long before my father's death that he had been abused as a child by his parish

priest. Dad always maintained a steadfast faith despite this and I think he portrayed true Faith in a Church that had badly let him down.

We had Missions and teaching Nuns in the Catholic schools.

At three times in my life when I was about to leave the Church God placed three priests on my path. The first was when I was on holidays in Melbourne. I encountered a priest who showed me he really knew and loved his community and the poor. This spoke SHEPHERD and COMPASSION to me. The second was my parish priest. He was a very humble, prayerful man who initiated so much life into the parish—he led the way with what were new ideas for the time. It was great to be part of the parish and a team that was enthusiastic about our vision. This spoke SHEPHERD MISSION VISION to me. The third I encountered after I had left regular practice of my Catholic faith. I stumbled into a Church one morning and a school liturgy was about to happen so I was about to make a quick exit and ran into the priest. He warmly invited me to stay if I wished. (Intentional) What unfolded for me during that homily and the weeks and months following was a total embrace of Catholicism again. My experience with this priest spoke to LOVE OF GOD, LOVE OF THE CHURCH, HOW TO ENGAGE PEOPLE, VISION. These men shaped me. They gave me an experience of Church I need and still need. One of these priests has died, one is in retirement and the other has a LEADERSHIP TEAM around him and is leading a strong vibrant Spirit filled community.

WYD08 was a game changer for me. As a participant, my life changed and I knew that I wanted to live my life with God in it and I have since committed myself by becoming involved in parish life and have since become as APRE in a Catholic school. Please continue to support these youth events!

In my experience of faith, it's important for me stay in a little community to rebuild myself (I was broken inside, completely destroyed) and recover relationship. I needed love and mercy in Church—only possible in small group—impossible to receive in large assembly. A journey where catechisms teach me how to be Christian, how to put God first. It takes time to convert and, confronted with experiences of others suffering and seeing mercy of God in other people's lives, gave me hope. Deep relationship between brothers and sisters, trusting and sharing helps a lot. Today: superficial relationships—don't share because afraid of judgement—stuck alone. Neocatechumenal Way gave me possibility to have brothers and sisters to share life journey with—lacking in today's society—in a Christian sense. We are together on a journey of conversion. My marriage wouldn't have survived without the Neocatechumenal Way and the brothers and sisters.

I am sincerely grateful to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, MSC priests and brothers who guided me in my education. These men were ahead of the secular priesthood in many matters especially with their acceptance of homosexual people and their insistence that love and respect should be accorded to them.

I went to [-] in 2016 and the worship we did there opened my eyes to the fact that Catholic worship could be charismatic and alive in the Holy Spirit. Previously I believed that Catholic prayer and worship was limited to the Mass and other sacraments. After this event I went to many other ignite youth events which lead me to develop my own faith and take responsibility for it myself. I

<p>now make my best effort to go to Mass myself each week and attend regular youth events. I think youth events are a very important way to engage youth in the Church, so they should be a priority of the Church.</p>
<p>The use of music in the Mass—to me a wonderful way of praying.</p>
<p>Not enough time, but I think God has forgotten about me.</p>
<p>My formation, both at home and at school was terrible, and it lead me down a very destructive path. My youth was wasted, and I'll likely never marry as a result of the poor choices I made before finally coming to truth. Now I have to struggle with the crosses of these struggles, and continue to learn to put my faith in God's grace and mercy, and healing. This journey is lonely as most priests today really aren't equipped with a proper priestly formation themselves. It's not an easy time to be a Catholic. In all honesty, I get the impression it's more a Church for non-Catholics than it is for Catholics today, given how rampant liberalism and its fruit, modernism, is in the Church, among her people. It is reminiscent of the falling's away of God's people in the Old Testament leading to Egyptian and Babylonian captivity, etc. Or if you want to go to more recent times, the violent French or Mexican revolutions. Also, I'm new to the [-] area, having moved here about 2–3 years ago from the [-] region. I went to my nieces' local school here for her annual awards night this year, and actually saw the school give a 'Masonic Citizenship Award' to students. Masonic, as in Freemasonry. Freemasonry is considered an automatic excommunication offense for a Catholic, and now we're permitting our Catholic schools to hand out 'Masonic Citizenship Awards'? https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_ban_of_Freemasonry http://www.papalencyclicals.net/ [-]</p>
<p>I have witnessed the gradual disintegration of Church teaching, attitude, and doctrinal knowledge over the last 50 years. Churches have been modified in sacrilegious ways for example, replacing kneeling benches with singular plastic chairs, preventing the faithful from kneeling before the Lord in His own house... what a disgusting thing. I have also noticed the moral decline of society such as abortion, euthanasia, and sodomite marriage successfully promoted in Australia with virtually NO OPPOSITION BY THE CHURCH. What a scandal.... The modern Church must wake up to itself, and get out of the worldly politically correct path it is following and stand up to the evil of our rotten society.</p>
<p>I am approaching 70 yrs. of age. I have been associated with the Roman Catholic Church for all those years. My father was a Catholic but “non-practicing” and my mother a convert and “practicing”. I studied in a Mercy Sister’s Primary school and a Christian Brothers Boarding school. I went to a Diocesan Seminary for seven years and served in ordained ministry for 17 years, including nearly six years as a [-] associate. After a period of painful discernment I decided to leave active ministry and applied for a laicization—I came to believe that was what the Spirit was leading me to do. I quickly learned that the official Church discerned the voice of the Spirit differently. The Document of Laicization clearly stated I was not to have any role in any parish where I had been, nor could I have any leadership role in the Church. That response made me very angry. You certainly knew you had cast into the darkness. Later reflection has led me to see this as yet another example of the institution being self-serving and self-absorbed. It is the kind of tribe protection behaviour that had ugly manifestations in the sexual abuse crisis. The protection</p>

of the institution's self-image and rules must override other realities. However, to be fair, my bishop, for whom I had a high regard, was very generous in providing me with financial support for my university studies for the first year. The second reminder of the Institution's self-interest being primary came when I was interviewed for a job with SVDP, on completing University, and was told I had won the interview. However, an Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese told the SVDP men that I could not have the job because I was an ex-priest. There could have been no other reason. Once again, there was no tolerance for someone who broke the rules of the tribe. Those experiences and others have led me to be very suspicious and critical of certain aspects of the institution. The last 29 years have seen me take distance from the institution in many respects, while maintaining interest in key involvement—like Eucharist, and forming a small group for support, reading and discussion. I believe that "in spite of" what the parish does, the priest says, or how the institution fails, I need to be part of a community of faith and action to maintain growth in faith, while acting for/with the poor. I read theology regularly, I stay up to date with international news about the Church, I attend Eucharist regularly and I am actively involved in SVDP. But I have little faith in the institution, its bishops in Australia or its current mode of operation. It has little credibility and I can see few signs of the bishops addressing the now enormous credibility issues facing the Church.

I grew up as a RC and attended a convent until year 5. My mum was a very devout Catholic. My father came from a Catholic Orphanage in [-], he was a very troubled man. As a teenager and adult I did not maintain my connection to the Church in any way. All throughout my life I still felt and believed I was a Christian and could see the difference between my upbringing and the upbringing of others who were not taught Christianity. As a matured aged person I see the value in what I learnt and practiced as a child. Sadly that is missing today in society. In recent years and more so since my mother's death I have felt the need to return to the Church and practice my beliefs. I have slowly been attending Mass a few times a year but am finding it ever so difficult to enjoy the Mass at my local church.

Our oldest daughter attended a charismatic renewal conference (then called [-] in [-]) and allowed us to become a more spiritually committed family. That was the pivotal point of change for us. Now we are disciples.

I have chaired Pastoral Councils in two parishes and been a member of Finance Councils. I am totally sick of being told that certain things will happen in the parish—with no consultation or advice being sought. Because of "divine right" attitude of clergy I find my role is one of rubber stamping or protesting after the fact and being labelled a "trouble maker". Likewise I am tired of being told by clergy that they know best and it is "my Church and I will do what is right for it". The real issues are to do with the attitudes of clergy and so I am extremely concerned that since they are the only voters in the Plenary Council we are likely to have any changes forthcoming—except ones that serve their purpose!

The now Bishop [-] was very influential to me as a Catholic. I was raised Catholic and came from a country that is predominantly Catholic, but with a very confusing and contradicting idea of it. When I first came to [-] in 2007 and attended his Masses at [-], I finally learned what it is to be a

<p>proper Catholic. There were so many things I had to learn as well as unlearn. He has sparked in me a genuine interest to get to know God better.</p>
<p>My experience as a divorced woman was that whilst one priest supported my decision in 1993, most parishioners ignored me and almost excluded me.</p>
<p>A priest since passed away drove 300 miles round trip to say Mass each Sunday he was loved by these rural people that he served so diligently.</p>
<p>As young people we were drawn back to the Church on seeing other young people and old, together shamelessly practice their faith, stand up against government in attempts to legalise abortion... we realised the need to go to our Lady, offer up Masses and spend time with our Lord in the blessed sacrament. This reminds us that young people want to see leadership, example, consistency and not changes of tradition and doctrine to please a minority of relativists with misguided Catholic formation. The Church always has and will be inclusive to all unlike what others allege and we have to maintain our doctrine and traditions as this is what will bring vocations at all areas of the Church, from religious life to family life.</p>
<p>As a prison chaplain, I experience Church in the prisons, being there to listen to a prisoner's pain, anxiety, fears and loneliness. I meet Jesus in the prison, sitting beside them, encountering the suffering and experiencing God's great love for us all. Running church services in prison is a privilege, breaking open God's Word with the men and the women, hearing their reflections on what God is telling them, it is such a great honour to be there, and then hearing them pray out loud for their needs and their sorrows. Church in prison, I often tell the men and women, is getting back to what the early Church did, sitting around in a room, listening to God's Word and reflecting and praying, a very moving and prayerful time.</p>
<p>Father's always being nice when I fall asleep in Church.</p>
<p>I have felt the presence of God every day in my life.</p>
<p>I grew up in the Church, I went to a Catholic primary school and high school. I attended Church almost weekly and even had some deeply spiritual experiences as a child and teenager, particularly on a NET school camp. Still, at university, I fell away from the Church. My faith had not transformed me, rather, I had this impression that I was a "good person" on the one hand, but that I had to earn love on the other hand. This confusion led me down dangerous paths. My parents were concerned about me and began attending a Protestant church in addition to Mass because their Protestant friends seemed much more grounded in the peace of Christ than they were. They studied the Bible with them and deepened their understanding and faith. They invited me to join them and God began working in me. Finally I had an epiphany moment where I realised that God loved me just as I was, but He loved me too much to leave me that way. I made Protestant friends, and didn't bother going to Mass anymore, though I retained the belief that the Eucharist was something special and different. My hunger for the Word was great, and I thought the Catholic Church had nothing to offer me in this area. Later, I married one of these Protestant friends, but about a year later, one of my other friends called me to tell me he was converting to Catholicism, and that it would be worthwhile to look more in depth at the Church of my youth. I did, and was astonished at the treasure trove of teaching available on the internet, deep wisdom</p>

cultivated over hundreds of years by numerous Saints. I felt like I had just been paddling in a splash pool by comparison. Why had this remained hidden from me? Scott Hahn became my mentor on this new phase of my journey. I had begun attending Mass again as my longing for the Eucharist reignited. This caused tension in my marriage, but when I finally stopped trying to convince my husband of doctrines and surrendered my longing for unity to God, he began working in him, and within a year, he had an epiphany of his own and converted to Catholicism. After the birth of my children, I again experienced much emotional suffering. It seemed that God had abandoned me and I suffered from depression. I now know that I was trapped within my small self, shackled with rights, wrongs, injustice and not receiving the love I felt I had earned. God lifted me out of this dark time with the help of a counsellor and the book 'Consoling the Heart of Jesus' by Fr Gaitley when I understood for the first time that I did not need to earn God's love, and that I did not need to be afraid of Him anymore. He did not work by guilt or manipulation, and I did not need to keep myself at a distance from Him for fear that He would ask of me more than I was prepared to give. More bonds were loosened. More were to come. I am indebted to the work of Fr Richard Rohr whose non-dualistic teaching has enabled me to weather the crisis of discovering two of my children and my husband have ASD.

I was a born Catholic who never practiced my faith. Never interested in going to Church for 32 years. By the greatest coincidence, I walked in to a retreat organised by a Catholic charismatic group called the community of the risen lord (CRL) I had a sickness that doctors couldn't figure out for 16 years, suffered greatly and was suffering from depression too. My life was transformed at this retreat, for the first time in my life, I experienced the unconditional love of God. God brought me back to the heart of the Church through this retreat. I was healed from my sickness, my addictions. It didn't stop there, my father who was an atheist saw my change and he decided to go to the same retreat and his life was transformed too also another Buddhist friend of mine. My father got baptised as a Catholic last year and my friend is getting baptised this April.

Sharing my story —My life began in 1950, when the Church was alive and well in my local area. The congregations were growing so rapidly there was pressure to build larger churches to accommodate them. Our parish had a parish priest, an assistant priest and a convent full of nuns to build and sustain our Church community. My parents' marriage was referred to as mixed i.e. Mum was baptised a Catholic and Dad was baptised Church of England. My Dad was fully committed to helping my Mum to raise us as Catholics and converted to Catholicism before he died from a stroke the day after his 43rd birthday. On reflection, I realise how fortunate I was to have the benefit of my parents' faith and life experience, which has provided me with a broad, ecumenical perspective, a vision of the possibilities and an unswerving commitment to making Jesus real in my life and the lives I touch, where relationships are everything because that's how we come to know and love God.

I think my best experiences of the Church which has helped greatly in my development of faith have been the impact made by priests. In two ways. Firstly, by my parish priests. I have been most fortunate to have mostly had priests who give excellent, relevant homilies. I am going to be blunt and say; these priests have not waffled and retold the Gospel. They have chosen a relevant part of the Gospel and said how it applies in today's world. The priests have been real about their own experiences and they have just given a thought/action to be carried with you out into the

community. The second experience that richly supports my faith development is working in a Catholic organisation (Education). Having worked in state education, I can see, hear and feel the difference/richness/belonging that comes by having of a Catholic identity. The home, parish and school relationship and partnership is crucial, in my belief, to the future of our Church.

One of the great surprises of growing up as a male was the discovery on several occasions that females had desires for genital sexual activity that were frequent, strong and life giving for both themselves and for a partner. Many times in boyhood/manhood I was embarrassed by my lack of my control over desire for sex compared with what seemed to be a relative disinterest by females. In time I met females for whom frequent sexual expression was neither distasteful nor embarrassing. They experienced sexual expression in their lives as normal and positive. They did not experience sexual expression as servanthood to men but as a normal part of their own personality profile. This engagement with women demonstrated that genital sexual activity in itself was something that could be enjoyed outside marriage and outside partnering. It was an element of who I was. The necessity became not abstinence but training my feelings to be contextual just as I do in the context of a myriad of other feelings and desires. This did not lead me to seek ...

I am an ex-Oblate priest. I wonder how much talent and experience has been wasted when men and women leave priesthood or religious life because they may feel like outcasts or unwelcome. How can we engage these people in the Church's ongoing mission in a forgiving and inclusive way?

I have strong faith but am disenchanted with the Church after the royal commission.

I write this tonight after preparing the texts for a Catholic School's celebration of the Mass to dedicate the year ahead to the community's holistic growth in faith and culture and for the blessing of all its members—children, staff and families—throughout 2019. It will be on Thursday or Friday of Week 4 in Ordinary Time (Year 1). When I considered the prescribed texts for the Opening Prayer, the Prayer Over the Gifts and the Concluding Prayer, I could not help but conclude as to the inappropriateness of the vocabulary and syntax in the texts. They are 100% beyond comprehensibility for the children if not also for adults. Will everyone just have to be patient while the priest tries to communicate the texts quickly in a way as inoffensively as possible? The school community is a captive audience for a communication of the Gospel's and the Church Tradition's Good News and what are we offering them—no substance which they can absorb through the incomprehensibility of the language and a demand to be patient while this is happening, thus their time, energy and motivation to be in such an experience being wasted.

My experience of faith as a young person is that my spirituality and faith in God has remained and grown throughout my life, however I feel the current Church does not fully appreciate my generation and ignores the fact that in 20–30 years' time many parishes will close due to lack of attendance because the Church will not change as society changes and welcome new generations. I find parishes as a young person a very isolating experience and find more connection with God in nature and the beauty of his creation than at Mass. The older generation of parishioners will be the generation that ends the Catholic Church as we know it if change does not come about in terms of how the Church Hierarchy is viewed and to what standard those in leadership positions

are viewed and held accountable. Clericalism has no place in the Catholic Church moving forward and I truly hope and pray the Church wears its scars openly and becomes more transparent and honest. There are people of my generation who have gone away from the Church because they do not trust it as there is no sign of genuine change or transparency. I hope this short message may find a way to help bring about the change so desperately needed in this Church to save it in Australia.

Only to say that the greatest gift to me from the Church has been the life of faith that comes through prayer and the sacraments. Also, that any good I have ever done in my life or in the Church has been done as a result of God's grace, and that I am only open to his grace through prayer. I'm not a great mystic and I'm certainly far from being a saint: my own prayer life often falls short, but I keep turning back to God, I keep practicing repentance through prayer. Only by doing this can I open myself progressively more and more to God, and then he "works marvels for me", almost in spite of myself. Jesus said to Blessed Angela of Foligno, "Make yourself a capacity, and I will make myself a torrent". If we truly want the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of the great South Land to come, to descend on the Church in Australia and the people of Australia as a torrent then we must zealously and assiduously work to open ourselves to him: to make ourselves a capacity.

After getting divorced, I came to my parents' parish, I didn't want to join the community but the people were very accepting and inclusive and kept asking me to join the choir and I did and made many lasting friendships and found joy again and through an ad in my parish newsletter I was able to attend a retreat for divorced people "Beginning experience" and had an emotional healing at that retreat. I would not have known about it had I not been attending my parish Mass and read the newsletter.

In times of need Church is there...Consolation. They never give up or pull out. # One parishioner wants to follow His will in word and action. She increased her Mass attendance to almost daily and husband learned by her example and is now going to Church on Sundays. # When he was at kindergarten he was told by his mother to go and pray for his little brother who was sick. His brother was healed of fever when medicine finished. His mother told him that his prayers had been answered. After this experience he was influenced to think about becoming a priest. As an adult he became a charismatic, accepted God and the Lord became alive to him. Now Gospel more alive and listens to Lord through song, prayer, Eucharist. Through Holy Spirit he is not scared to be different, has greater understanding and more alive, through saints, teaching and preaching.

Shouldn't be complacent. Love and power of love. Blessed to have God to fall into. # God can work in you only as much as you are willing to be open to Him. Charismatic retreat experience—learned to be open to Holy spirit, and pray for others whenever they come to mind, as they may be in need of prayer at that moment.

As a religious sister of over fifty years commitment, my faith has been nurtured deeply by the Church... by the rich liturgical and sacramental life offered and by wonderful studies, especially in scripture. I have also been gifted with faith-filled companions in the parishes in which I have lived and where I experienced some leadership. Hopes were high over twenty five years ago when we engaged in the [-] Archdiocese in 'Shaping and Staffing,' energetically leading groups who came

up with open and wonderful ideas. But nothing resulted. Again in 1996 we answered the call of the Australian bishops to take part in the research project into women in the Australian Church. We rallied the women of the deanery and presented our reality in creative and clear ways... In 1999 a great summary was produced, 'Woman and Man; One in Christ Jesus. However again, nothing really happened and what is so insulting about this is, those who commissioned this had the power to change some things regarding women in the Church, and again nothing. Obviously they did not have the will. And now in this coming February, at the women's colloquium in Adelaide, there will be another 'frank and open discussion' regarding women in the Church and a bishop will mark the twentieth anniversary of Woman and Man!! Is it any wonder women like me are cynical regarding the Church? Just another addition: after spending much of my life (39 years) in formation, both nationally and internationally, my offer to the local seminary on my return to Australia was answered with an, 'I'll get back to you'... I'm still waiting. I do think there is a bright side to all this. Many religious women of the older institutes, like myself, have 'moved to the edge.' So we can now be found in tutoring refugees, working in prisons counselling those whose lives have unravelled. These are the new ways, new paths... perhaps even for the Church.

My mother taught me the love of God, followed up by a Catholic schooling. That was pre-Vatican II. I feel too much changed too quickly after that.

While there are a few priests who go out of their way to welcome everyone during Church services, we still have many priests and bishops who refuse to accept people, lapsed Catholics, divorcees, remarried Catholics etc. to participate fully in the Eucharist. I have witnessed priests who publicly speak out at funerals, weddings and refuse the sacraments to those present. Would Jesus do this? I think not.

Knowing my families' history of serving, giving, worshipping in the Catholic Church, also this year I have been reading and wanting to learn more about St Mary Mackillop, I feel called to her and her mission in life and all of this my family history and St Mary Mackillop has shaped the faith, trust and love I have for God and I want to share this with my children and the people I love and those who are around me on a daily basis.

- My experience as Pastoral Associate when the priest was diagnosed with a brain tumour. The community stood together and many more people wanted to be involved and did get involved leading liturgies taking on greater responsibility.
- For many people their only experience of Church is at Catholic schools and hospitals and not at parishes. Perhaps more resources need to go into these areas rather than to parishes.
- Church has lost credibility due to its teaching on sexuality:—sexual orientation, contraception and sterilization.
- Mandatory celibacy is no longer appropriate in this modern world.
- The lack of inclusion of women in the leadership of the Church is a symptom of structural sin that exists within the institution.
- The group appreciated the opportunity to speak to these questions and look forward to the Leadership of the Church to fully engage with the points raised.

My parish in [-] has Confession available every day before Mass, and it is wonderful to be able to receive God's forgiveness when we need it. Also, they enhance the Adoration of the Eucharist

through Benediction with solemn hymns, reception of the Eucharistic species in the tongue and with a communion tray in case it may fall to the ground. The priests give you Communion with such refinement that tells of the precious gift it is. They also taught us to do a genuflection and to show a reverent silence whilst in the presence of the Tabernacle. This solemnity draws me to spend silent prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament and draw from it strength, consolation and support.

My experience has been that some priests can communicate and leave a lasting impression. This is because of their ability to appreciate each person and the path that the person is travelling on. This has aided me to become a better Christian and deepened my faith.

Parishes such as [-] have greatly influenced me and helped my faith grow. Without the beauty and tradition that [-] has, I would have a very different upbringing. A parish where the priests are strong, holy, committed, faithful to Church teachings and unafraid to speak hard truths, is a Church that I, and many other young people, would love to attend weekly. There are too few parishes such as [-]. I therefore ask and pray that the Plenary Council will help to foster strong, traditional parishes such as [-].

My father in law (practicing UC) said to me one day... "I saw your Church leader is ill" (he was talking about the Pope). My inner monologue was thinking... I didn't know Fr Frank was sick. It made me realise that the local Church (its people and actions) mean more to me than Rome and all its institutionalised practice, wealth and power.

Many current 40ish non-attendees left because they were denied participation in official roles. These roles were regarded as reward for "long service". Now we see the result, sadly.

I grew up in a wonderful household, but in my teens I had two interesting things happen to me. One was playing music to join in the liturgy, which I have followed through right up to today. The other was to do some work for the [-]. When I became a teacher in a Catholic school, I also had a light bulb notion: Catholic teachers have replaced the clergy, and sometimes the parents, as the sole source of evangelisation. Fortunately, I have had the pleasure of working with some great priests and other religious over the years, and also enjoyed many books on history and faith. I love teaching children, and sometimes adults, about God. Some people say I have a gift of being able to recontextualise the Gospels. I think I'd be wasting time if I didn't.

I have no great success to share in a worldly sense. I grew up in [-] in a Catholic family. My father taught us our prayers and did his best to provide for a family of eight children. As the son of Irish parents, he was faith filled but paradoxically ignorant of the presence of God to help his needs. He succumbed to alcohol so our family suffered, still loving him as best we could. I graduated as a primary teacher, married a Catholic and hoped life would be successful. I attended Mass on Sundays and had my three sons baptised as they were born but I lacked any real understanding of what my Catholic faith was or held. I did not know Jesus was close, present or loving as the variety of Catholicism experienced in my era was more the fire and brimstone variety from religious who had probably only known the same. After some years of marriage and moving to the isolated mining towns of Central [-], I discovered my husband had been unfaithful to our marriage for a prolonged period of time and the counselling sessions we attended were 'to find out what was wrong with me'. I felt increasing anxiety, isolation, helplessness and despite the robust spirit that

had been formed in the not-so-easy childhood, a sense of hopelessness. I had given so much to so many for such a long time, I was aware I couldn't sustain this. As my husband finally left and married another mother at the Catholic school my sons attended, the pain and humiliation became unbearable. I cried out to God with all my might along the lines of ... "If you are really there, I need you to help me now!" Gently and slowly He revealed His presence in simple, everyday ways that kept food on the table, petrol in the car and the icy fingers of despair from taking hold. I would drop the boys to school, attend morning Mass and joined a Scripture study group our parish offered. It was through the Scripture group that Jesus really made His presence known and understood, with warmth and relief flooding my mind and heart. I didn't care about any of the disastrous circumstance I was in. I had discovered Jesus. I attended healing Masses, Eucharistic Adoration and every grace-filled occasion I could, to cling to the greatest treasure I had found. My sons were successful at school, the oldest graduated with an Economics Degree, the second an Engineering Degree and the third a Teaching Degree from [-]. Their faith story hasn't been the same as mine—they loved and missed their Dad and looked to him despite the family breakdown. They are wonderful sons despite carrying their own wounds. I pray constantly they too will come to know of the great love that Jesus has for them. My life has witnessed to Christ's loving presence to family and friends. My greatest sadness is that it took such suffering and despair to discover His true and loving presence. I look for every opportunity to live and share my faith in the parish I attend and the State School community where I teach. I have shared my story in an earlier submission.

I was raised in a Catholic family. My physical needs were met but I was emotionally very deprived as a result of domestic violence between my parents. A 4th sibling (I was 10 yrs of age) was adopted at his birth for his safety. I didn't meet him till he was 60 yrs of age. I excelled academically at school but in retrospect was very depressed even then. At primary school especially I was subject to cruelty, intimidation by Catholic nuns. My siblings suffered at the hands similarly of dishonourable nuns, brothers and priests. I was a very talented girl but was too depressed to develop my talents and I received no encouragement at home where a cold war waged. I attended university and graduated in medicine at age 23 yrs. I was subject to unrelenting sexual harassment in my first post graduate year. I had a nervous breakdown in my 3rd year and was treated by a psychiatrist who turned out to be immoderate and quite mad. I was married 1982. It was a disaster and the marriage was annulled. It was at this stage I came back to being a committed Catholic whereas previously for 10 years, I was careless. I was pursuing higher exams in medicine in 1994 when I had a road accident and was rendered a quadriplegic. My life was decimated. Miraculously I recovered largely—well enough to pass my higher exams in 2011 to be a physician. I have suffered tremendous degree of discrimination within the medical profession especially from women specialists while doing my advanced training following the exams. During this time I was also taking care of my frail elderly mother till her death in December 2016 as well as experiencing conflict in my living situation which has been on and off for some 20 years and dealing with chronic and at times, severe melancholic depression. On a more positive note I have been receiving treatment from an excellent psychiatrist since April 2017. There have been times when I have literally cried out to God in my anguish that I might please have some relief from my mental pain. My desperate pleas have been met with graciousness from the Lord and I have survived that particular day. My pain is now that I had the ability to do something great (medicine,

music, sport) but circumstances prevented me and it is too late now. I have learned to obey through suffering that is for sure and without these trials I may have been on a path of destruction. I wonder if I will be held accountable for not using some of my talents. Milton wrote concerning his blindness "Does God demand service light denied..... he also serves who only stands and waits". I hope though I will not be disappointed with heaven. I say this with tongue-in-cheek. I don't think I will be disappointed.

What has shaped my faith the most is contemplative prayer. It has deepened my faith and my appreciation of scripture, the liturgy and the natural world. My journey started with the question: is this God thing true? And searched at my local library ...

The Church is so rich of knowledge/traditions/promises that will bring us closer to God. There are so many saints that set an example for us. The Church provides so much sacraments that gives us grace to be holy. Only if we go find out about it, access it and make the most of it.

1. I have encountered many wonderful priests along my journey and it breaks my heart to see them so afraid of showing love and caring for their 'flock' for fear of being accused of a sexual advance. I have also met many beautiful Nuns who would make exemplary priests. A mix of Male and Female priests would perhaps help the Church as a whole.
2. As a divorced Catholic (not of my initiation, but my ex-husband) I feel separate from my Church community. Theoretically unable to receive the sacraments (Holy Communion) as I have remarried. I am now married to a wonderful man but it was devastating to me when I could not even get our relationship blessed by a priest, let alone marry in a Catholic Church. I did manage to have our wedding rings blessed by a priest who knew the impact this alienation from my Church was having on me. We resorted to being married by an Anglican minister and are now approaching 20 years together. I should not have to feel 'unworthy' or 'dirty' in the eyes of my Church because I am divorced.

CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	1,390
Afghanistan	2
Andorra	1
Antigua and Barbuda	1
Argentina	2
Armenia	2
Austria	2
Azerbaijan	1
Bahrain	1
Barbados	1
Bhutan	1
Brazil	14
Canada	3
Chile	1
China	3
Colombia	4
Ecuador	1
Egypt	2
El Salvador	7
Fiji	3
France	2
Germany	4
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	2
India	7
International	2
Iraq	2
Ireland	12
Italy	2
Kenya	1
Lithuania	1
Malaysia	6

Country	Number of respondents
Malta	2
Mauritius	1
Mexico	1
Nepal	1
Netherlands	5
New Zealand	19
Papua New Guinea	3
Peru	2
Philippines	15
Poland	4
Portugal	1
Republic of Korea	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Singapore	1
Slovenia	1
South Africa	18
Spain	1
Sri Lanka	3
Switzerland	1
Timor-Leste	2
Tonga	1
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Uganda	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	41
United States of America	8
Uruguay	1
Vietnam	2
Zimbabwe	2
Not stated	267
Total	1,890

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
Ignite Conference 2018	1,500
40 Days for Life Brisbane Inc.	1,000
Mt St Michael's College	980
Our Lady of the Southern Cross parish	800
St Ignatius Parish	500
CCR Brisbane	500
CCR Brisbane	500
St Maximilian-Kolbe Parish at Marsden, Queensland	500
St Patrick's College, Gympie	500
Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement	427
St Mary's College	355
Veterans Care Assn.	350
Carmel College	350
Southport Catholic Parish	300
Emmanuel Community (Brisbane) & Men Alive	300
Southport Catholic Parish	200
All Hallows' School	165
Dutton Park Parish	140
Loreto College Coorparoo	140
Mother of Mercy Parish - Hendra/Northgate/Hamilton, QLD.	133
Brisbane Catholic Education	120
Surfers Paradise Catholic Parish Community	112
Jubilee Catholic Parish of the Archdiocese of Brisbane	107
Year 10 Students Leadership Day	100
Quarantine	100
ACU Short Course in Theology (Brisbane) - The Future of the Church in Australia	100
Archdiocese of Brisbane Council For Ecumenism And Inter-Religious Relations	100
St Mary's Catholic Parish South Brisbane	100
Awaken	100
Northern Unit of Marriage Encounter (QLD)	100
Xavier Catholic College	90
Mary Queen Mother Group	80
Loreto College Coorparoo	75

Name of group	Group size
St Mary's College Maryborough	70
Mrs	63
Saint Mary's Catholic College	55
Red Hill choir	55
Stella Maris School Staff	55
Knights of the Southern Cross (Qld) Branch 46	53
ACU Short Course	50
St Edward the Confessor Parish	50
Holy Spirit Primary Bray Park	50
St Mary's Parish, Beaudesert, QLD	50
Latin American catholic community in Brisbane	50
Merindah Study Centre	50
St Joseph's Primary School	50
Third Neo-Catechumenal Community of Wynnum	50
St Mary's Parish, Beaudesert, QLD	50
Holy Spirit Bray Park	50
KSC Branch 93	46
Unity College	42
Neocatechumenal Way, Guardian Angel's Parish, Wynnum	40
Frassati Australia (Brisbane)	40
Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish Coorparoo	36
Lambielike Ladsnladies	36
Reclaim	35
Our Lady of the Valley Parish	35
Bracken Ridge Youth Group	31
Upper Mt Gravatt/Wishart Parish	30
Friends of St Augustine	30
Mrs	30
Brazilian Catholic Community	30
St Patricks College Gympie	27
Latin American Catholic Chaplaincy	27
St Brigid's Catholic Parish	27
Iona College	26
Holy Spirit Seminary Banyo	26
Our Lady's College	25
Lodges on George (2 groups)	25
St Eugene's Parish Over 50's group	25
St Catherine's School	24

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
St Ignatius Parish, Toowong	22
Our Lady of the Angels School	22
Bne Catholic Bushwalking Club	20
Sts peter and Paul Bulimba	20
All Saints Catholic Parish Boonah	20
Real Talk Australia	20
Our Lady of Fatima Youth Group	20
Holy Spirit Catholic Church	20
Darra Jindalee Youth Ministry	20
Couples for Christ Oceania Mission - Brisbane Chapter	20
YAYA Upper Mt Gravatt/Wishart Parish	19
Stafford Parish Group	19
Faber Centre of Ignatian Spirituality	18
KSCQ Maroochydore Branch 88	18
Small community "Light of God" (Latin american catholic community in Brisbane)	18
North Country Deanery	18
Mandarin Group, Chinese Catholic Community Brisbane	18
St Patrick's Parish, Gympie	18
Secular Franciscan Order, Kedron Qld Australia	17
Hosanna Prayer And Praise Group	17
Southport Charismatic Group	16
The Latin American Catholic Community in Brisbane	16
Holy Cross Catholic Parish Redcliffe, Qld	16
Holy Cross Catholic Parish Redcliffe City	16
St Benedict's Youth Group	16
Nundah Wonders Local Community	15
7.30 Mass Group Holland Park	15
Murri Ministry ACM Archd Bris	15
Sisters of St Joseph, Joanna Community Group	15
Srs of St Joseph. Joanna Community	15
Catholic School Parents, Queensland	15
St James Parish Coorparoo	15
Religious women and men in this parish	14
Sacred Heart Parish Booval	14
Guadalupana Small Group	14
Leahy Family	13
Cooloola Coast Catholic parishioners of Gympie Parish	13
Parish Pastoral Council	12

Name of group	Group size
Prayer group	12
Small community: Guardian Angel	12
Jubilee Parish Liturgy Committee	12
Samford Parishioners	12
St James Parish Pastoral Council	12
MenAlive Gold Coast	12
Reaching for God's Light-Adult Faith Formation Group	12
All Saints Youth Ministry	12
St Benedict's Parish	12
MJs dinner	12
Hive	12
St Patrick's Beenleigh Meditation Group	12
NET Ministries	11
Women's Spirituality Group	11
St Flannan's Catholic Parish	11
Our Lady of Fatima Primary School	11
Neocatechumenal Way - Second Community - Guardian Angels Parish	11
Plenitude. Latin American Catholic Community	11
Murri Ministry	11
L'Arche Brisbane	11
Women's Spirituality Group	11
BCE St Mary's yr 11 2018	10
None	10
Men Alive (men connect) in our Parish	10
Men's discussion group The Gap Brisbane	10
Parish Youth Ministry Team	10
Parish Youth Ministry Team	10
Parishioners from Maroochydore Catholic Parish	10
St Stephen's Catholic Primary School	10
Northside Brisbane Bible Study group	10
Small Community Luz del Norte	10
Lourdes Hill College	10
SALT Young Adults Group	10
Worldwide Marriage Encounter - Northern Unit	10
Queensland Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee	10
St Agatha's Primary School Board	9
St John's Wood The Gap Parish	9
JS and friends	9

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Parish Youth Ministry Team	9
Holy Cross Ignatian Prayer Group - Lutwyche Parish	9
Grail in Australia Brisbane Group	9
Caloundra Catholic Community Social Justice Network	9
Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane	9
Brisbane Courage	8
Brisbane Courage	8
Youth Evangelisation Office	8
Friends	8
Choir Practice Group	8
Parish group formed to discuss issues re the Plenary Council	8
Mt Alvernia College - Staff Group	8
MOUNT ALVERNIA COLLEGE	8
Spirituality Support Group, Caloundra	8
Knights of the Southern Cross	8
Just a group of involved women	8
Knights of the Southern Cross	8
N/A	8
Social Justice Group St Peter's Parish Rochedale	8
Padua house at the Holy Spirit Seminary	7
Maleny Catholic Community	7
Teams of Our Lady Brisbane Team 1	7
Indooroopilly Parish Pastoral Council	7
All Saints PC Session 21/2/19 Table 2	7
Social Justice Group	7
Community for a Better World, Australia	7
Tuesday Morning Ladies Group	7
Kedron Brook Catholic Community Edge Youth Group	7
Bracken Ridge Parish	7
Bach and Rowe Families	7
Murri Ministry Aboriginal Catholic Ministry	6
Basanovic Family	6
St Agatha's Group (4)	6
Holy Spirit Aged Care 2	6
Holy Spirit Home for aged	6
Parish Council sub group of Bracken Ridge parish of St Joseph & St Anthony	6
Isaiah	6
All Saints Parish	6

Name of group	Group size
All Saints 14/2/19 PC Session Table 3	6
St Patrick's Beenleigh Parish Pastoral Council	6
Redcliffe Parish Discussion Group	6
Our Lady of the Way Petrie Qld. Private group	6
Mother of Mercy Youth	6
Latin American Catholic Community	6
Mt Alvernia College	6
Mount Alvernia College	6
All Saints Albany Creek	6
St Rita's College Clayfield	6
Archdiocese of Brisbane COUNCIL FOR ECUMENISM AND INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS	6
All Saints Parish	6
Group 2 of the 1st Neocatechumenal Community of the Jubilee Parish	6
Casual group of friends	6
Michael Hegerty	6
St Peter's Catholic Community	6
All Saints Parish small group	6
Group 2 of the 1st Neocatechumenal Community of the Jubilee Parish	6
Concerned Catholics	6
Southport Catholic Parish	5
Residents Group	5
Holy Spirit Community at Carseldine	5
Holy Spirit Aged Care 1	5
Holy Spirit Aged Care 3	5
Holy Spirit Aged Residence	5
St Rita's Church small group discussion	5
People who responded to invitation to participate in a Listening-Dialogue session.	5
Hervey Bay Parish Youth Ministry Team Leaders	5
All Saints	5
All Saints Parish Albany Creek	5
Mt Alvernia College	5
John Ten Family	5
All Saints Parish	5
Plenary Council Group	5
Group 1 of the 1st Neocatechumenal Community of the Jubilee Parish	5
Holy Spirit Home Gr 1	5
Holy Spirit 2	5

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Walker Family	5
Youth Leader Training North	5
Maleny Catholic Community sub-group	5
Bible study group	5
St Rita's Proclaim 2018 group	4
St Agatha's Parish Group 3	4
Group of Catholic Women religious	4
People who responded to the invitation to participate in group discussions	4
Upper Mt Gravatt/Wishart Parish	4
Members of the Parishes of St John the Baptist & The Good Samaritan	4
Members of the Parishes of St John the Baptist & The Good Samaritan	4
Members of the Parishes of St John the Baptist & The Good Samaritan	4
Subgroup of the Maleny Passionist Family Group	4
Parish L&D Session	4
Parish L&D Session	4
Mount Alvernia College	4
Member of Good Samaritan Parish and St John the Baptist Parish Brisbane	4
Stapleton Gunther	4
Our Lady of Victories Bowen Hills	4
Holy Spirit Home 3	4
N/A	4
Music Ministry Sacred Heart Maleny	4
St Agatha's Parish Group 5	3
Informal group	3
ST Brigid's Parents and Staff	3
The Da Silva Family	3
No name	2
Gomez Family	2
A married couple, very active in the Church and a Charismatic community; but we speak for ourselves with this	2
Brian and Marlene Wellington	2
Anna & Chris	2
Latin American Catholic Community In Brisbane	2
Maroochydore Parish	2
Family	2
Larry and Deborah McErvale	2
Ed & Cathy Moloney	2

Name of group	Group size
Mercy Community, Nudgee, Aged Care	0
Nelhouse Nelhouse	Not Stated
Kawana Waters Branch, Catholic Womens League, Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Caloundra Queensland	Not Stated
Southern Region of the Diocese of Rockhampton	Not Stated
CaCloundra Catholic Church	Not Stated
A group of Catholic Social Service Providers (Brisbane Archdiocese)	Not Stated
Australian Prophetic Council	Not Stated
Queensland Catholic Education Commission	Not Stated
Petrie Parish	Not Stated
BCE Potential Day	Not Stated
Youth Leaders Ipswich	Not Stated
Holy Family Parish, Indooroopilly	Not Stated
Home group from Petrie Parish	Not Stated
Maximillian Kolbe Prison Ministry Special Works SVDP Conference Woody Point QLD	Not Stated
Kenmore Parish	Not Stated
Catholic Parish of St Augustine & St Monica	Not Stated
St Rita's Catholic Parish	Not Stated
Our Lady of Grace	Not Stated
St Michael's Parish, Dorrington 4051	Not Stated
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference of 'Our Lady of the Rosary.	Not Stated



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