



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

Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

A Report to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Trudy Dantis, Paul Bowell, Stephen Reid, Marilyn Chee & Leith Dudfield



Report prepared by: National Centre for Pastoral Research
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
GPO Box 368
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Telephone: +61 (02) 6201 9812
Email: ncpr@catholic.org.au
Web: www.ncpr.catholic.org.au

Contents of this Report

◆ About this Report	1
◆ Diocesan Summary of Submissions Snapshot: May 2018–March 2019	2
◆ Number of Submissions Received	3
◆ Individual Submissions	4
◆ Age of Respondents	4
◆ Sex of Respondents	5
◆ Countries of Birth	6
◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	7
◆ Religion of Respondents	8
◆ Group Submissions	9
◆ Age and Sex of Group Members	10
◆ Responses to Question 1	11
◆ Themes discussed in response to Question 1	12
◆ Submissions made in response to Question 1	14
◆ Responses to Question 2	82
◆ Questions for Plenary Council	83
◆ Responses to Question 3	86
◆ Stories of faith or Church shared in response to Question 3	87
◆ Conclusion	117
◆ Appendix 1: Complete List of Countries of Birth	118
◆ Appendix 2: Complete List of Groups from your Diocese	119

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

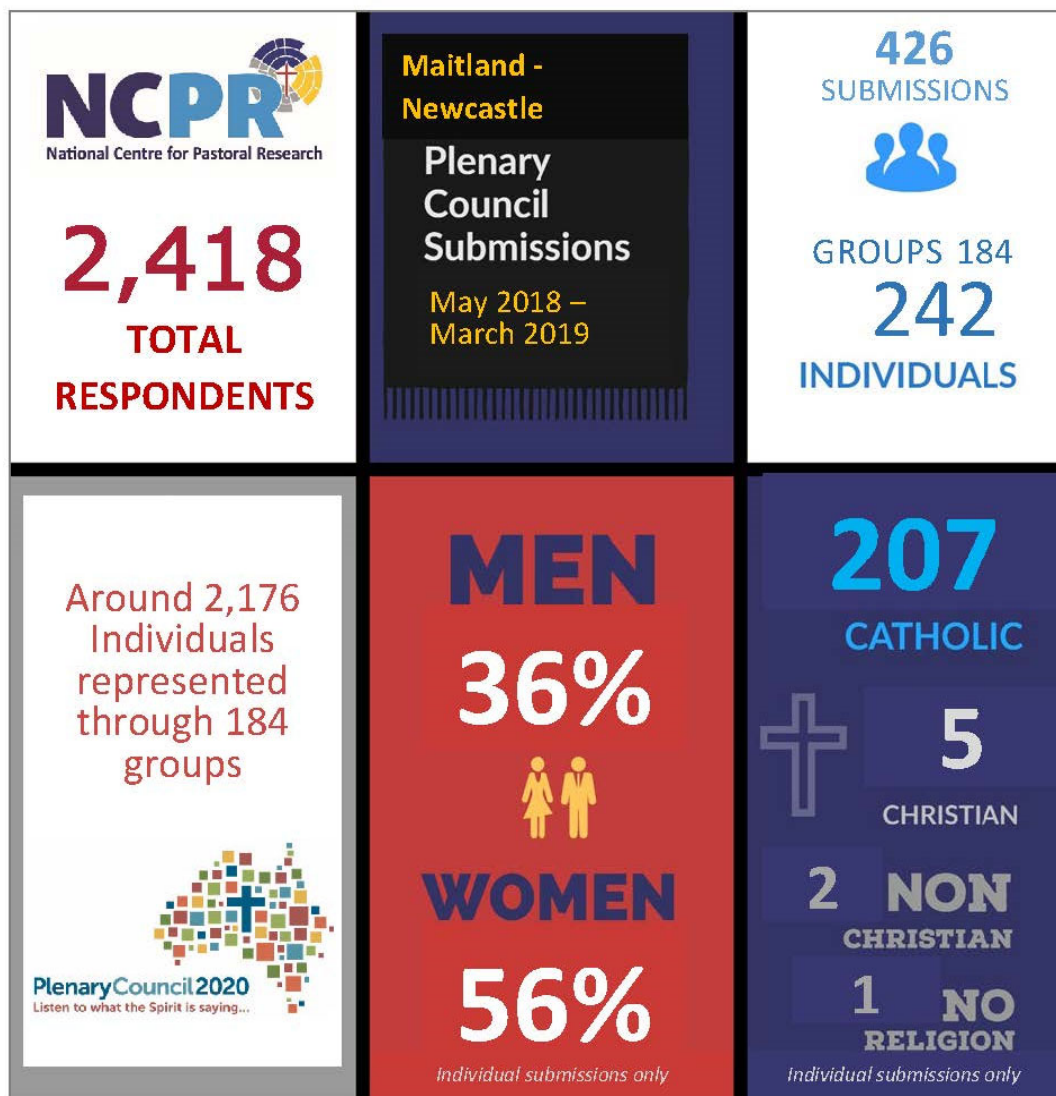
Paul Bowell

Stephen Reid

Marilyn Chee

Leith Dudfield

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 – Maitland-Newcastle

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

From the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, we received a total of 426 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 308 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 30 were unsure if they had. About 87 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 426 submissions, 184 submissions were from groups or organisations and 242 submissions were from individuals. There were 2,176 people represented through the 184 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 2,418.

Table 1: Number of Submissions	
Total number of submissions received	426
<i>Participated in Listening & Dialogue Encounter?</i>	
Yes	308
No	87
Not sure	30
Not stated	1
Total	426
Submissions received from groups or organisations	184
Submissions received from individuals	242
Total	426

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 242 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 Maitland-Newcastle. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 69 per cent (168) were received from those aged 50 and over. The most number of submissions within this age range were received from the 65-69 years and 70-74 years age groups (34 responses each).

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

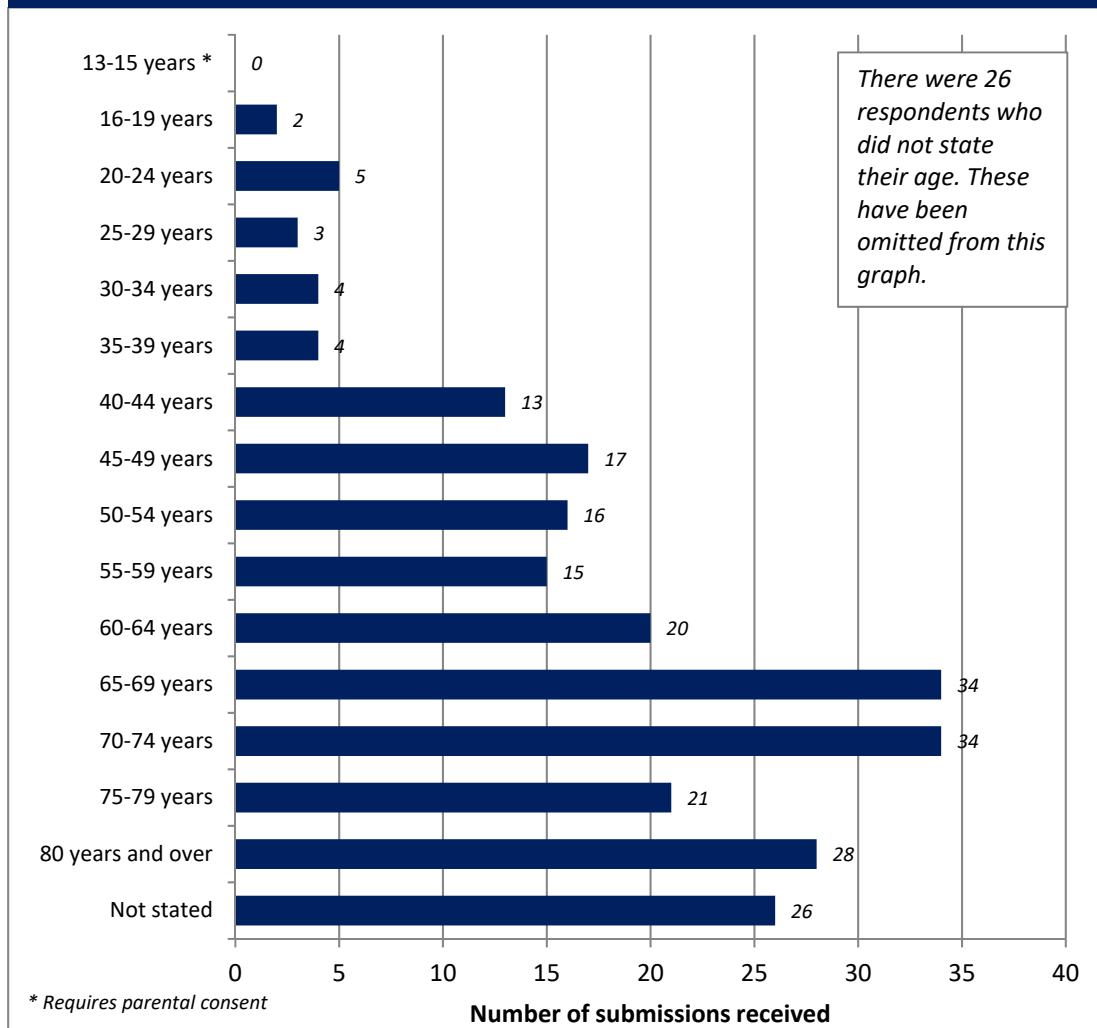
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were two individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

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

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

13-15 years *	0
16-19 years	2
20-24 years	5
25-29 years	3
30-34 years	4
35-39 years	4
40-44 years	13
45-49 years	17
50-54 years	16
55-59 years	15
60-64 years	20
65-69 years	34
70-74 years	34
75-79 years	21
80 years and over	28
Not stated	26
Total	242

* Requires parental consent

Fig. 1: Age groups (individual responses only)

Sex of Respondents

A little over half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (56%), while a further 36 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 87 men and 136 women who made submissions. Four respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 15 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)	
Female	136
Male	87
Prefer not to say	4
Not stated	15
Total	242

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 over 13 per cent came from other countries, while around 13 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	178	73.6
Netherlands	3	1.2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	13	5.4
Other Countries	16	6.6
Not stated	32	13.2
Total	242	100.0

Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	178	73.6
Other English-speaking country	18	7.4
Non-English-speaking country	14	5.8
Not stated	32	13.2
Total	242	100.0

Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	155	64.0
Other English speaking country	22	9.1
Non-English speaking country	27	11.2
Not stated	38	15.7
Total	242	100.0

Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	151	62.4
Other English-speaking country	28	11.6
Non-English-speaking country	25	10.3
Not stated	38	15.7
Total	242	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 three individuals who identified themselves in this way, representing just over one per cent of all individual respondents.

Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (individual responses only)	
Yes	3
No	205
Not stated	34
Total	242

Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 242 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 207 respondents (86%) were Catholic. Five respondents were from other Christian denominations while there were two from non-Christian religions. A further 27 respondents did not state their religion and one respondent chose the 'no religion' response.

Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)		Person	Percent
Catholic		207	85.5
Other Christian:			
Anglican		1	0.4
Churches of Christ		2	0.8
Other Christian		2	0.8
Non Christian:			
Other religion		2	0.8
No religion		1	0.4
Not stated		27	11.2
Total		242	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 153 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 23 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while eight respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 23 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

Table 7: Religious description (for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)				
	Female	Male	Not stated	Total
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	85	66	2	153
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	15	7	1	23
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	2	0	0	2
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	3	3	0	6
Other	8	4	1	13
Not stated	7	2	1	10
Total	120	82	5	207

GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 184 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 2,176 individuals were represented through these groups. However, six 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 126 group submissions provided a group name, 58 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 San Clemente High School with around 95 members. There were also a number of other parish and school groups such as the Staff of St Joseph's High School, Aberdeen NSW with 75 participants and St Catherine's Singleton with 60 members. There were eight other groups with 13 members or more.

Table 8 : Group submissions from the diocese	
Name of group	Group size
San Clemente High School	95
Staff of St Joseph's High School, Aberdeen, NSW	75
St Catherine's Singleton	60
St Michael's Parish	60
Franciscan Fraternity of St. Francis and St. Clare, Lake Macquarie	43
Parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary Taree, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Wingham, and their related Mass centres	21
Charlestown Wednesday ladies	16
St Joseph's Parish Community East Maitland	16
St Joseph Parish, Toronto	13
Taree Parish	13
Mrs	13
Parish Group	12
Cardiff parishioners	12
Diocesan Association of Pastoral Ministers	12
Parish Group	11
St Francis Xavier's College student leaders	11
Belcher family	11
St. Columban's Primary School	10
St. Joseph's Toronto	10
Holy Name Primary School parents	10

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 70 years and over age group was the largest group represented with 604 members. This was followed by the group aged 50–69 years with 569 members. There was no age provided for eight 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	146
20 - 29 years	139
30 - 49 years	378
50 - 69 years	569
70 and over	604
Unknown	8
Total	1,844

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

Of the total 1,895 group members whose sex was reported, 58 per cent (1,094) were female and 42 per cent (801) 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	1,094
Male	801
Total	1,895

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
- Social Justice and the Environment
- Sacraments
- Leadership and Church Governance

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)*
 - *Care for neighbour (p. 36)*
 - *Better faith formation (p. 38)*
 - *Being a witness in society (p. 34)*
 - *Keeping the faith (p. 33)*
 - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching (p. 32)*
 - *Renewed call to holiness (p. 35)*
- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
 - *Greater inclusion of all (p. 108)*
 - *Fighting for human rights issues (p. 110)*
 - *Care for the environment (p. 112)*
- 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)*
- Leadership and Church Governance (Chapter 7)
 - *Greater role for women (p. 83)*
 - *Greater leadership from bishops (p. 87)*
 - *New model of Church, diocese, parish (p. 93)*
 - *Greater leadership from priests (p. 88)*

- *Greater involvement of the laity (p. 84)*
- *New leadership and governance model (p. 91)*
- *Ending clericalism (p. 80)*

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

- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *Listen to one another more (p. 136)*
- *Greater connection with and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (p. 120)*
- *More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse (p. 102)*
- *Listening to the laity (p. 138)*
- *Modernise Church teachings (p. 169)*

SUBMISSIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

In keeping with these guidelines therefore, the submissions that follow are only from those individuals or groups who consented to having their submission being made public and being shared with their diocese. About 40 per cent of all responses did not have consent for one or both of these criteria and therefore, their submissions have not been included here.

I think my Spirit is anxiously telling me that we in Australia need to find every way in our power to embrace all peoples and faiths in the world. I am ashamed that I don't see any organised aid and help to refugees who may want to resettle in regional Australia but there are no policies to make this work. God wants my congregation to be full of all colours ... not just white undemonstrative Catholics.

I think God is asking us to address the fact that people are no longer moved to respond to an autocratic Church.

The Holy Spirit has provided an extraordinary opportunity for us to focus on the primacy of the pastoral in our role as Church. The Church must be clear about its central mission or in other words its core beliefs. At the heart of these core beliefs is a founding myth squarely centred on the Paschal mystery, the gospel of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mission is a dynamic process which has continuously evolved since the early Church, resulting in multiple expressions of ministry and deeper understandings of its mission. If this dynamic is suppressed, the Church adopts a maintenance stance, sometimes championed by traditionalists, however since Vatican II the Church has engaged with a process described by Pope John XXIII as "aggiornamento"; that is living consistently with God's promise of the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit "making all things new", basis should cease. All Catholic identities must express this greatest commandment and have to be applicable not only to our greater Australian community whom we serve but also within the Church itself in the way we care for and respect each other. We as Church must fully embrace our past failures wholeheartedly and as I think of the victims of the sexual abuse crisis within our Church I have come to regard them as modern martyrs. They

have catalysed this process of examining ourselves in depth not only individually but also organisationally and have emphasised our Church has failed in this greatest commandment i.e. its central mission. We must re-embrace this mission of loving God and neighbour because it is the ultimate source of hope into the future. Our Church must focus on its pastoral role both within and without and be an example of an institution which has learned from its sad past and increasingly becomes an example within the Australian community of witnessing the Gospel. Our Church's mission must reflect humility and embrace willingly the recommendations of the Royal Commission in order to be an ongoing spiritual presence within Australian society. As Pope Francis has emphasised, mercy is a process and the ecclesiology of mercy clearly suggests the Church is in 'process', mercy is relational and can change all involved and we all qualify to be ministers of mercy.

I think God is asking for strong and bold leadership which at the moment is sorely lacking. We the lay brothers and sisters in the Church feel very disempowered because the hierarchy of the Church feel they know it all and are above everyone else. We are all made equal in God's eyes and each and every one of us have a God given talent which is not recognised or acknowledged in many instances. This man made Canon law is very frustrating and disrespectful and in some cases directly opposed to what the Bible has to say. Jesus continually fought with the Pharisees and Sadducees about their man made laws, which he said made the word of God to no effect. This is what the Catholic Church is doing and people are not stupid. They resent this big brother approach and are voting with their feet as you can notice in the declining church attendance. The buck always stops at the top and the last two and present Pope have to take full responsibility for all these sexual scandals. They cannot wash their hands of it. All the priests who have been found guilty should have been defrocked years ago. The present Pope is trying to do a good job but is hamstrung by all the bureaucracy and entrenched tradition surrounding him. There is nowhere in the Bible that says priests should not marry. St Peter our first bishop was a married man. Judas Iscariot was a married man. Another set of man-made laws?? Much of the sexual abuse may not have happened. When will the Church own up and take responsibility? Why are women not allowed to be deacons and play a much larger role in the Church?? Who was the first person Jesus appeared to after his resurrection? Mary Magdalene. Who did not abandon him when he was dying on the cross?? All the faithful women. The priests need to be taught how to teach the word of God instead of preaching a lame sermon and in most cases have no clue of how the three readings relate to each other. Maybe less Canon Law and more focus on the meaning of God word. I have been a Catholic all my life and attend Mass regularly but I have had to go elsewhere to get fed the meat instead of being a babe and been fed milk. Please do not let this be a talk fest. The book of James tells you that faith without works is dead.

To help ordinary people connect more meaningfully with God in a way that helps them make sense of their lives in a spiritual context. Young people are a special challenge in regard to this as many have lost touch with their ancestral cultural roots and so don't necessarily connect well with the traditional symbols and rituals of the Church and its liturgies. They may respond better with a historical perspective. An idea would be to encourage Catholic school students to create a visual museum in their schools of the salvation history of their faith, showing major events from the Bible and the Church up until the present day. Something of a visual timeline. This could be put

together over time with rewards for best items of contribution (for example, artworks with explanations). This both would help them to understand God's plan of salvation running through history and is a way to share it with parents and visitors.

I believe the Holy Spirit is calling on the leadership body of the Church, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, to publish in the national secular news media, a national apology for the history of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in Australia. Such a statement of unreserved apology should be from the ACBC (signed by all or at least many of the bishops) on behalf of themselves and the Catholic faithful, for: the abuses committed over the years by clerical and lay members of the Church; the terrible suffering of victims and their loved ones; the failures of many in positions of authority in the Church to respond appropriately to reports of abuse through denials, inaction and cover-ups; plus a pledge to do everything possible to ensure such abuses never happen again. Such an initiative would be a real impetus for healing. It would be a real sign of humility in leadership and would most probably serve as a catalyst for other Christian ecclesial communities to also issue their own national apologies. We need to remember the saying, 'Justice delayed is justice denied', which could be the case for some survivors if they don't receive healing as soon as possible. Contemplating issuing such an apology might be difficult for some clergy who might fear the loss-of-face involved in making such an admission, but when faced with various difficulties in life we need to remember the words of scripture, 'Do not be afraid!' We need to act with faith.

Calling us to listen more intently to each other, to a greater kindness and generosity for all, to express faith more openly. Inviting us to bring people back to the Eucharist and to ask/reflect on how have we failed as so many of our own children and families have left? Called to show the love of Jesus in a more active way. We are called to welcome all people regardless of their background or religious belief or faith practice and to accept everyone who asks to receive the Sacraments, all of them. Called to unite a very divided Church. We are called to value creation. We believe that the liturgy and the music particularly need to be more modern for a modern world.

- To overcome the disillusionment and distress felt with the Hierarchy.
- That we go back to basics and visibly be a positive and good presence in our families, communities and in the world.
- That bishops be held accountable by each other and where appropriate, under the Law, when secular wrongs are involved.
- To recognise the anger caused by the cover up revealed through the Royal Commission.
- That everyone has the opportunity to participate as members of the Body of Christ.
- That women in the Church and Lay Leadership be a part of authentic "power" sharing.
- That parishioners be more actively involved in the physical and spiritual running of the parish.
- That clericalism be seen as preventing others from "being the Church".

- To be more aware of Overseas Clergy, not as a solution to the shortage of priests.
- More openness and accountability from our Church leaders.
- That the Australian Church embraces our Indigenous people and culture as urged to by St John Paul II.
- To respect the different gifts that God has given to those who have answered the call to priesthood.
- That all people, women as well as men, are able to use their God given gifts for the mission of God in the world.
- Strong teaching and education on Catholic Religion beliefs and precepts.
- More spirituality is needed.
- To get back to basics.

1. Read the scriptures.
2. Unite with the other Christian churches.
3. Give women an official role and voice in the Church
4. Encourage every Catholic home to have a Bible, one that is opened and read from time to time.
5. Encourage the laity and bishops to redouble efforts to take part in ecumenical dialogue.
6. Revive the ancient rite of ordaining women to the Diaconate. As Deaconesses they would have clerical status and therefore a real voice in the Church. Their role in the early Church is obscure so we are not bound by tradition and the Church in Australia could determine their role and responsibilities.

Integration of Catholic parish, school and family communities are essential to renewal of Church in an increasingly secular society. To achieve renewal the following are recommended:

- 1) Recruitment and maintaining skilled priests who can opt to be celibate or non-celibate;
- 2) Admission of female clergy, starting with a diaconate that leads to full priesthood within 5 years;
- 3) Readmission of married priests under 65 years of age;
- 4) Focus on youth ministry to recover from the already ridiculously low youth participation in parish life;
- 5) Admission of priests from other countries is fine provided they are articulate in English and have the ability to develop empathy for the Australian cosmopolitan way of life;
- 6) Ecumenism across all faith congregations: Christian, Judaism and Islam. Respect for all belief systems that engender enlightened moral teaching and faith in God;
- 7) The Pope and bishops who have failed to date to effect essential renewal must accept some additional risk so they can try new pathways and solutions. They must step beyond their

traditional ways. They must manage their natural instinct to control outcomes particularly if they believe in the Holy Spirit;

8) Voting Rights at the Plenary Council are totally inappropriate to achievement of effective change. Once again, the bishops appear to want to maintain full control. They appear unable to trust the Holy Spirit working through the Laity (Submission attached date 5th August covering this issue in more detail).

Reach out to those on the 'edge' of their faith. Being more honest and open about our faith and being prepared to grow in the faith. To be more tolerant of the differences amongst us viz: the disabled, different races, younger people, aged people. Welcome our Aboriginal brothers and sisters with open arms. Care for the poor and needy.

To get back to the basics of genuine Catholicism. We need to properly catechise our own flock before we campaign for social justice or have interfaith forums with Islamic groups. Let's end the political correctness and proclaim the truth. Our own bishop released a statement during the same-sex marriage debate indicating he thinks it would be beneficial to society, whilst admitting it would be against Catholic teaching. How can this be? A bishop should know that homosexuality is a mortal sin which is so dire, it calls out to heaven for vengeance. When even our most senior shepherds are blind or ignorant, what hope is there for the laity? I am tired of listening to sermons about welcoming refugees, whilst young people who cohabit and live in mortal sin approach the altar and receive the holy Eucharist on Christmas or Easter, the one day a year they bother to attend Mass at all. Others approach the altar dressed as if for the beach. We no longer fear the Lord, respect His Church or understand the sacraments or the concept of sin. We have been allowed to stray by our priests who almost never remind us in their homilies of what we are expected. Non-Catholics who attend Mass for special events such as weddings or Christenings receive communion because nobody tells them they must be a baptised Catholic in a state of grace to do so. That state seems no longer to exist, evidenced by our confession line on a Saturday morning, which is always very, very short. Teach the catechism. Resurrect our customs and traditions. Raise the bar. The Church needs to resume the business of saving souls.

1. Back to basics—what is a follower of Jesus, and what is required by Jesus of us individually—the personal transformation of each person and of all followers. It necessarily means we must break out of our clerical culture—back to a discipleship culture where religious are servants to all, not the masters. Where religious are resources, guides etc. to individuals and our communities in general. Not only is discipleship an individual transformation, it is also a communal transformation and this probably is achievable only through small groups and programs whether international, national or regional. But underlying all is the personal relationship each follower has with Jesus. It requires more than simple bums in pews, money on plates and Sunday Mass attendance. These behaviours alone are what we have been doing for decades; the evidence is in—we are losing numbers if only through aging congregations.

2. As followers of Jesus—what is our mission? Go and make disciples! We have spectacularly failed with our younger generations because we Catholics have lost sight of this ... see 1 above. If we are flawed in our approach to discipleship, it is apparent to those we are trying to reach out to.

3. What we have been doing for the last 50+ years has failed, except for migrants and their families and 'refugees' from other more poorly performing Catholic communities. If we continue on this trajectory and keep doing the same things then we are simply managing our collective demise. It is time for transformation in thinking around our parishes and structures, especially if they are getting in the way of 1 and 2 above. This can also take into account the limited religious resources available, the need to relieve priests of administrative and other non-pastoral burdens, the need to fund key roles for lay persons where possible. We need creativity in how we have community of followers (fellowship) meeting, growing and reaching out to others.

I think that God is asking us to begin to look at ourselves, to begin to live our lives like Christ did. To welcome other Christians, to bring our churches into the 21st century. To stop putting ourselves, as Catholics, on a pedestal, to pray more, to study the Bible, to embrace women as important people in our parishes and to make the churches more relevant for our young people.

I think God is asking us in Australia to accept and embody an Australian Spirituality. To allow the Holy Spirit of this Great South Land to re-create every aspect of our lives. This would mean allowing the wonder and awe, the beauty and power of the Holy Spirit to impact on our style of leadership, our care of environment, our attitude to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, our love and support of the stranger and the marginalized, even how and where we celebrate liturgy. God is asking us to make incarnate the Holy Spirit of this Great South Land.

To be authentic and credible witnesses to Jesus Christ and his mission to:

- love God,
- love one another as I have loved you, and
- spread the Good News and make disciples. The mission is to initially bring people into a relationship with Jesus and may not include attendance at Mass.

Have a meaningful prayer life with God. Encourage others to pray and teach children simple prayers (but only prayers that make sense to them).

To engage our youth and future generations to hand on our faith in a way that is meaningful to them. This may entail ways that do not fit existing rigid structures.

To re-introduce children and youth with Catholic teachings in schools. Religious studies covers so many topics that Catholic teachings are minimal at best. Youth at our Catholic high schools and colleges identify themselves as Christian, not as Catholic. Schools should also make more use of their church. Perfectly good churches are empty when liturgies are held in school halls. Children are not learning the reverence or spiritual connection you have when entering a church. You do not make a sign of the cross with holy water, genuflect before sitting or given time for quiet reflection and prayer. Re-introducing church attendance for liturgies in schools will help to bring back Catholic identification.

As Catholics, we did not relish the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse. We suspected it of being a front for an all-out attack on our Church. However the person appointed as Chair was a barrister—and later judge—I have dealt with over the years and who I have always regarded as intelligent, thoughtful and fair—Peter McClellan. I believe that God has

spoken to us through the final report of the Commission released by Peter. That doesn't mean that every single recommendation is warranted. But to me the broad thrust of the report of the Commission is informed and inspired. One recommendation which stands out to me is the recommendation that priests should be allowed to marry in Australia.

I think we need to change the small things and the big things will take care of themselves.

Our main theme centred around love and forgiveness. We felt there is a core of goodness in all of us but first we need to accept our own faults and God's forgiveness to us and this can help us in our efforts to forgive others.

We think God is asking us in Australia to take part in the development of a Catholic Church in this country, at least (but also in the whole world) which is comprised of people who have a much deeper understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ than is presently the case. This implies a Church which recognises the real need for ongoing deep and real education in the meaning of faith and spirituality throughout the different stages of life's journey, from childhood through youth, young adulthood, middle age and senior age. For many years, the Catholic Church has placed the emphasis of Christian education almost entirely on schoolchildren. After that, little is available except the often inadequate homilies of weekend Mass. Catholics therefore often remain locked in an immature and childish understanding of their faith, and their spirituality, we believe, remains undeveloped or even fundamentalist throughout their adult life, without achieving any depth befitting their years. The Church says, for example, it's up to parents to deepen the faith of their children, but these parents may often have little to pass on because their understanding stopped when they themselves left school. We see the journey of faith as a series of deepening stages of spiritual growth through life: a growth in our personal relationship with God whose Spirit provides growth in wisdom. As Karl Rahner SJ had urged at Vatican II, future Christians must be more contemplative (mystical), or there will be none at all. There is much emphasis on formal liturgy, but no deepening understanding of the meaning of Mass and the Sacraments. Scripture readings are usually interpreted as if they were history records, without an examination of their spiritual meaning. Many 'observe' their faith out of obligation and the fear of punishment, rather than as a means of enhancing their relationship in love with God. Many in Catholic schools (including teachers) have no true concept of what Mass can mean. Children as well as adults today live in a hyper-rational, scientific world of clear meaning, and so need special help to find and adopt the beautiful, different, counter-cultural spiritual meanings which our faith has to offer. Atheists and agnostics find much to ridicule in fundamentalist and literalist religious belief—and rightly so. But our faith has greater depth and deeper meanings for human hearts than they can ever know. But these treasures are being largely neglected by our teaching Church. We need true spiritual guides and teachers who can take us beyond a mere belief and belonging system, and they should be available to everyone in whatever stages of the journey of life. It is the personal relationship with God: Father, Son and Spirit that counts. The Reformers were right about this. What God is asking of us is the formation of a community or Church which gives this priority in its teaching and support. Out of this will flow all good works.

Transparency, kindness, tolerance, dignity. The fruits of the spirit. A system that puts the ordinary person and goodness above the corporate interest and personal gain.

A MORE INCLUSIVE AND LISTENING CHURCH.

- * Everyone in the group definitely felt burdened by the judgemental practices and unrealistic expectations of the institutional Church especially with regards to:
 - * tolerance and compassion towards marital issues which exclude people from receiving the Sacraments e.g. contraception, divorce and remarriage, the complicated process of annulment stops many from applying, which means they look elsewhere for a faith family.
 - * treating all people with respect instead of judging them e.g. gay people, divorced people, former priests, nuns and brothers.
 - * the Church needs to be far more vocal in her response to social justice issues, especially asylum seekers and children kept in detention irrespective of the opinions of others, the plight of Aboriginal people and those dependent on social welfare. These issues are far more important than an individual's marital or gender status.
 - * kindness, compassion, empathy, tolerance, respect and benevolence should be the basis of all we do and believe. It's all about JESUS!

RETURN TO GOSPEL VALUES: SOCIAL ACTION Versus RULES and ECUMENISM Versus CATHOLIC ARROGANCE. WE IN REGIONAL AREAS ARE OFTEN DISADVANTAGED IN THESE AREAS.

- * Be Jesus People—not wound up in so many rules and regulations but to blend the rules with social activism like He did to help those in need; mentally and physically, emotionally and financially. We should have the "smell of the sheep". The Jesus in me loves the Jesus in you!
- * Take our faith out into the "market place" which makes us more aware and respectful of other faiths. To seek UNITY with ALL denominations. There's more that is the same about us than is different.
- * We, in regional areas are missing out, and becoming 'insulated' from papal exhortations and church guest speakers often because of the closed mindedness of our parish priest.

One of the big things I think God is asking of us in Australia is to show compassion to and give help to the many displaced persons who are coming to our shores. I think it so wrong to keep them locked up for so long. They should be processed as quickly as possible so that they can start to get a meaningful life for themselves and their families. They should be welcomed and given all the help they need.

Stop living like Europeans and North Americans and start living as Australians in our fragile, isolated, deeply spiritual land. The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit. Work to create communities and community spirit in family, neighbourhood and country. Look outside ourselves to learn other ways, not slavishly copy but consider what is unique to us and our land and how we can do better. We need to look back to our beginnings, both the beginning of Christianity and the beginning of European Australia in order to see what is really fundamental and what we no longer need.

What is God asking of us at this time? ... To be present to God, be open to the Spirit and to listen and respond in obedience

- * Pray each day in thanksgiving; in intercession for those in need; asking for guidance and inner strength. In our prayer to be open to the Spirit, listening to and heeding the call of the Spirit.
- * Reflect on God's Word with hearts and minds open to His truth, seeking right understanding and

transformation—Return to the Gospels—reading them, focussing on the true message, following His Word and acting as the Spirit directs us.

- * Remember that the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

- * Become ever more conscious of where we have been deceived and judgemental and unforgiving and with the Lords help to change and grow in holiness.

- * Gather together, to participate in both the Mass and in small groups as companions on the journey, loving, caring and encouraging one another. Coming together "as Church"—in its primary form—in small groups.

- * Heed our baptismal call to be priest and prophet.

- * Hear the voice of the laity, including women and children. Recognise the role of women and the laity in the Church and community and ensure there is a gender balance in decision-making groups through a process of discernment.

- * Be open to learn from our sisters and brothers both inside and outside our Church; to hear what the Spirit is saying through them. Open our ears and hearts—to those who have NO HOME, NO HOPE, NO COMMUNITY—to those who search for love and understanding.

Educate children and adults so they may —

- * come to a deeper knowledge the Lord Jesus and His Way, that everyone may have opportunity to participate in Church and society and there may be a more equitable distribution of wealth

- * give due consideration to all the biblical laws and precepts to rightly discern and hold fast to what is immutable and not allow secular culture to undermine and water down God's laws. "Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess 5:21)

- * be on guard against the slumber of complacency and as necessary come to repentance, forgiveness and restitution.

- * be alert to the deception of Satan with his lies and false promises, robbing people of inner peace and joy.

- * evangelise with actions and when necessary words.

Be instruments for the Lord to draw others to Him by—

- * giving witness of the changes in our lives of God's transformation power—living and speaking out when necessary in our everyday lives

- * showing compassion to those who are grieving, families who are struggling, the poor, the homeless, refugees and the marginalised and oppressed

- * willingly sharing whatever gifts He has given to us for the good all

- * caring for each other, for all creatures and for the environment

- * recognising and ...

Acceptance of the marginalised. That we, as a Church, are inviting, inclusive and accepting of all, following Jesus' example. Even though a number of people feel "different" (Gay and Lesbians in particular), that they feel that there is a place for them in the Church of today.

God is asking small groups to be encouraged and nurtured within the Church to meet on a regular basis outside of the Mass (i.e. worshiping, Bible study, activities to encourage and explore ways of making the congregation more inclusive).

To work harder to connect with our local communities. We could do this by finding ways to get to know our neighbours. We could offer to help with small chores but it is also important for people to accept if others offer to help them too because this helps to build relationships and connections. It's also important to talk to young people about God's love and that they can trust Him to guide them and give them wisdom when they make big and small life decisions. Make sure that there are fun local groups available for youth and help provide transport for them to get there.

To be a genuine, loving faith community which listens and reaches out to others.

We think God is asking us in Australia to be more hospitable and sensitive to the needy in our parish, the sick and aged, Aborigines, migrants. We could be more involved in local activities in parishes including care of the aged and elderly, visiting in care homes, etc. We often don't know who the parishioners are who may need help, support, companionship. It would help to have leadership that encourages and supports individuals to reach out to others. We tend to leave the caring role to organisations like the St Vincent de Paul and do not much more ourselves except donate to appeals. We need to be more consciously followers of Jesus supporting and encouraging one another to be/do what He calls us to. We need to look firstly at ourselves and ask how can we be a better witnesses and disciples—show good example to others by living a good Christian life.

To reconnect to God and his people i.e. the Church community people need to sense a feeling of community based on the brokenness of their lives.

To develop strong communities in a sustainable environment. Our planet is threatened by climate change due to our excessive need to consume and our desire to grow the economy. This is one of the great moral issues of our times and concerns not just climate but people. The resources of the earth are finite and will not be available to succeeding generations if we do not ... Australia is especially in danger from global warming as seen in recurrent droughts, longer bushfire seasons and deforestation. Pacific islands are already feeling the effects of rising sea levels. Wildlife is threatened everywhere by destruction of forests, pollution of the rivers and oceans. What is God asking of us at this time?

- As individuals and as parish communities to become more aware of the facts about climate change.
- Set up reading groups to study Pope Francis' writing *Laudato Si'* and see what practical steps we can take to reduce our water and power.
- *Laudato Si'* is a lengthy document and many people may not read it. So, develop user-friendly resources for small groups to use to discuss the issues it raises.
- Encourage parish councils and teams to investigate what can be done on the parish level to reduce our use of water and power and to green our environment by planting trees.
- Encourage our clergy to speak about key aspects of *Laudato Si'* in Sunday homilies.
- Write to people in parliament about our need to have policies that help sustain the environment instead of policies that put financial gain before the well-being of the environment and the health of people.

- To follow Jesus' example (i.e. to love, be open and accepting).
- To include and accept everyone.
- To help everyone in need.
- To support each other and accept whatever cultural background as Australia is multicultural.
- To stand for fairness and justice in the world.
- To translate the model of Christ into a contemporary context.
- To look after our environment.
- To be filled with faith, hope and love.
- To find new ways to bring young people into the Church.
- Not let tradition get in the way of a spiritual relationship.
- To continually pray for each person in Australia, but also those less fortunate than ourselves.
- To be a community which genuinely loves its neighbours.
- To reach out to those suffering or in need.
- To eat with unclean ... there is still such a class divide in our society and we need to face it.
- To come together as one unified family/Church in aim of creating one big relationship with each other as Church.

To change our Church to be more meaningful and appropriate to today's context and today's youth e.g. language used and rules such as celibacy.

World peace, More priests—Discussion with the young to make the vocation more appealing. There are few young Australian men entering into the priesthood. Bringing families together at Mass. Outreach to our isolated communities. Simplifying the annulment process.

To keep our faith and tradition but to modernise in some way. Contemplate on the teachings of Jesus not what is happening around us building community, serving others. To be caring, compassionate to become one as community, To be like Jesus through our actions in how we treat others, in what we say, our own behaviour. Welcome everyone equally no matter the circumstance. Take responsibility. Bear witness by example. Engage with and grow in faith. Use resources wisely and generously. Support each other's faith. Engage with and work with those in need. Continue our faith journey. Role models for younger Australian's and support youth. Walk humbly and act with justice, show kindness and compassion inclusive for all (homeless, refugees).

To be more outspoken on refugees and government policies. To make Catholic schools and Education Institutions more Catholic and promote active participation in parish/ diocesan life. Allow the Rite of Reconciliation to be used in parishes. To be able to live among the people and mix freely no barriers. For all people to be more active in "living their faith" in caring for the needy and disadvantaged. To find peace. To have unity and respect for others. To share in all matters to help the needy. Show courage. Show charity.

To look out for the poor (e.g. housing)—challenge the system and create more social housing. To embrace our social responsibilities in a global context. To provide aid to overseas/developing countries. To challenge current government policy regarding refugees. To expose our young people to their religion through actions like Vinnies, DARA Van. To speak out boldly on social justice issues like offshore detention. To look after our environment To be open and welcoming to all. Not to discriminate against gays. To re-think the role and theology of the priest (i.e. celibate,

<p>married, female) and make the priest relevant to the service/leadership demands of the 21st century. To give real power to the laity in decision-making within the Church at all levels. To fully implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into sexual abuse. To show students in our Catholic schools what makes Catholicism a living religious tradition. Not to let traditions get in the way of faith and love. To help young people recognise that the Church still has an important role to play in their quest for answers to the universal questions. To promote spiritual nourishment. To explore the power of prayer</p>
<p>To be kind, help others and to accept other people for who they are— It is the 21st century, we need same values that will apply to everyone. Apply Gospel values to the modern day world. Give real life examples in order to be authentic Catholics. To reduce the judgement of particular groups and values that is held within the Church. Administrators and priests need to act out these values and accept others if they are different.</p>
<p>God is asking of Australia to come together and pray for the future of the Church, to consider where we are in our faith journey and how the Church could best support us in this journey. To spread/evangelise the faith amongst our Church/families. How can we make the faith relevant?</p>
<p>1) To practice what we preach; 2) Church leaders to step up and not cover up abuse or social injustices but to live by the 10 Commandments; 3) As Church we need to reach out to the marginalised and be role models for the rest of the world.</p> <p>1) How to attract youth to the Eucharist; 2) Be aware of the suffering and needs of others; 3) Care for the environment; 4) Reach out to other Christians; 5) Be a happy Church and be tolerant of others.</p>
<p>To consider a style of leadership which enables a fuller, active participation and authority from lay people. To consider setting terms for bishops and priests (e.g. 15, 10 years). To consider optional celibacy for priests and the inclusion of married men as priests, as in the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches. Not to let tradition get in the way of love and connection. To listen to what others think about the Church and their reasons for thinking this way. To consider new ways to be Church—reconsider some traditions such as patriarchy. To consider the role of women in the Church To think carefully about the needs of the Church now vs. historically. To engage in interfaith dialogue and be respectful and inclusive. To be open, loving and honest towards everyone. To slow down and remember the message of the Gospel—to love one another. To ask questions. To remember positive stories from past experiences and remember all the good done in the name of God. To stand up for what we believe in, especially when the stakes are high. To look after our environment and show leadership in this area. To provide guidance to young people. To modernize our way of thinking and doing.</p>
<p>To follow the teaching of Jesus!</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be active in the community (visible, supportive providers). - To be considerate of and show support for diversity. - To advocate for social justice in the Government. - To use our position of privilege to make the world a better place. - To love one another—EVERYONE—and to be inclusive of everyone. - To look after our environment. - To have more small c-catholic and less large C-Catholic. - To ensure that tradition does not get in the way of faith, hope and love. - To make the Church relevant to modern Australians. - To put aside previous conceptions and look at things anew. - To be true to the message of the Gospel. - To 'de-mystify' the practices of the Church and share with all. - To be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. - To acknowledge and provide equity for active roles in the Church.
<p>I think God is asking us all to be faithful, to include everyone in the Church and to listen to all people in the Church. To not only focus on the youth but also to reach out to other groups in the community and to create a community again.</p>
<p>God is asking us to break down the walls around our Church—emphasising not people coming to us but us going out to them. In order to do this, it is necessary that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * we recognise more clearly our common humanity (not presenting ourselves as superior), * that we are a light of truth leading the way in building a Christian nation, * that we are a Christlike presence to one another, showing love and care, * that we reflect on Jesus the Man, in word and deed, Jesus the simple teacher. <p>Then we must break down the man-made walls and see ourselves as one with our compatriots in Australia. In our attitudes we must show tolerance to all (e.g. Muslims and LGBTIQ people) and come together with them. Also we need to build a Church which does not perpetuate a culture of guilt.</p>
<p>To adopt a Church structure which recognises the equal gifts of all.</p>
<p>Church institutions and structures need to be open to change, to cooperate and communicate.</p>
<p>These preliminary comments set the tone of our group response. They emphasise 'looking forward'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I am testing you by the fire of the Holy Spirit that you may be clean of heart. * 'Come back to Me with all your heart.' Let us be open to Australia with Jesus in our hearts. * We must read the signs of the times so that we may be LIGHT to the world in areas of justice, peace and leadership. * We want to relate to the messianic mission of Jesus not as we did in the past, but as a leg-up into the future. Let us relate to the people and to our culture as we find it today. Let us deal with what is.
<p>Some of the thoughts written down after discussion—Topic—the absence of young folk (around 20 to 40 or so years) from Sunday celebration of the Mass. Lack of interest possibly related to many things such as cost of living and housing, busyness, with both parents working, sport etc.</p>

Some in the group decided to ask their young folk as well as siblings, why they were not attending Mass and really listen to their response. Thought was given to the European influence on the Church architecture in our area, where congregations may consider themselves more an audience rather than being participatory; as well some of the language of our Mass was felt to be a poor translation and not easily understood. We may need to focus less on numbers at Mass and more:—

♣ on why community is important in one's Christian life,

♣ on why young people are not motivated to participate,

♣ on how we the Church (laity and clergy) can be open to LISTEN to young people and allow them to voice their questions without contradiction / judgement and how we can help them cope with the social pressures that prevent them from understanding and practicing their Faith. When the opportunity arises, we need to:

- validate young people where they are at,
- acknowledge their goodness, their generosity to family and friends.

♣ lead by example and not fear speaking about Jesus and prayer and God's love for all of us, God is asking us:

- to be grateful for the many blessings we have in this country including Freedom,
- to find ways and means of sharing these gifts and blessings with those who have not,
- to reach out hospitably and try to understand the spirituality of younger people who do not necessarily join the community at the Sunday assembly. In the group, there was recognition of the huge cultural change and challenges facing our population and faith community and wondering if the hierarchy of the Church really listen to the laity and act accordingly. Also feel more consideration needs to be given to the marginalised e.g. homosexual people, divorced persons allowing them to be accepted into the full unity of the Church

- To address environmental issues.
- More involvement with youth and the Church.
- To address issues revolving around Aboriginal Australian inequality.
- To address humanitarian issues.
- To be involved in interfaith acceptance and education.
- To accept and cooperate with other religious perspectives, especially those of our Indigenous nation.
- To shift our focus to social issues outside of our personal sphere, embracing charity and generosity.
- To look after our environment.
- To welcome refugees and break down prejudice.
- To treat one another with respect.
- To end violence, bullying and other negative outlets for people's pain.
- To be accepting of one another and to bind together as a community.
- To look after the environment.
- To be grateful for the lives we have and focus on the positives.
- To make a positive change to help the problem of global warming.
- To be good people.

- To emphasis the protection of the environment.
- To be inclusive of everybody, regardless of their race, gender or sexuality.
- To allow everyone to have equal opportunities.
- To give.
- To ask for peace among all regardless of religion, background and culture.
- To respect all types of people.
- To love one another and live a selfless, giving, compassionate life.
- To love one another equally.
- To give everyone equal access to their beliefs and faith.
- To help and assist those at a disadvantage and who are a minority in society.
- To aid and accept refugees and asylum seekers looking for a home in Australia, especially those being treated badly on Nauru etc.
- To consciously protect and preserve our natural environment so that future generations may both live and enjoy it and not feel it's damaging effects when ill-treated.
- To continue outreach focused on selflessness and servanthood.
- To make spirituality more engaging for the individual.
- To protect the weak, the old, disabled and marginalised who need help; to give them a future.
- To protect the environment—we are the ones who can make an impact.
- To protect the children. Let them grow and support them in their childhood with sponsorship, scholarships and inter-community mingling—it's important.

To work actively and with respect and love to enhance the physical, emotional and spiritual lives of our fellow citizens. To respect and maintain a sense of wonder at the created world and the gifts of each person and living thing in it.

One of our issues is a perception of not being open. The Royal Commission has flagged a lack of due and transparent process for the victims of abuse: rightly. However, it appears to me that as a Church we are quite judgemental and so welcoming and open when it comes to those who sit or who are seated on our fringe: divorced, remarried, gay, same-sex marriage and families, disaffiliated youth, those with mental health issues, other churches. It occurs to me in this process that the Spirit is calling us to a more authentic place in our faith, relationship with Jesus Christ and the wider community. I believe God is asking us to do more for those who are on the fringe: there must be away to welcome the LGBTQI community more authentically—change the wording in the Catechism would be a good start and work to a better language where they are concerned; for divorced and remarried, especially those for no fault of their own are in that place and unable to get annulments; and a more progressive way of celebrating Sunday and other days of the week for those who feel less connected to the ageing community of the Church.

Called to a greater acceptance of people from other faiths, lifestyles, same-sex couples, non-Christians, boat people/refugees. To open our eyes as a country and to see beyond Australia. Why don't I go to Mass? Lack of a deep faith/indifference. Lack of faith and trust in the Church as a whole. They fail/have failed to be beyond reproach. Feel I do not need to go to church to be a good Christian. In myself, [I] do not get anything from going and feel a hypocrite going to church when in fact I am [not gaining] from it.

Restore JESUS to his rightful place. The tabernacle has been moved to the side of the Church and in some Churches into a chapel away from the main altar. It's like telling the guest of honour to go off and sit to the side. The Eucharist should be above the altar at all times. We should stop insulting the King of kings by shoving him into a side room. A lot of altars are now barren because we have banished him from the altar. Also the prayer to St Michael the archangel, the defender of the Church was recited at end of the Mass, as decreed by Pope Leo 13th. It was stopped in about 1970. Can we please reinstall this prayer at the end of the Mass?

For the past two years, our parish Pastoral Council has been trying to discern what the Holy Spirit has been asking of us as a community. We have spent time reading the writing of Pope Francis and books on being 'missionary disciples' such as 'Rebuilt,' 'Divine Renovation' and 'Spearhead'. We have attempted to listen to the voices of our community and the wider Church. We have attached the 'vision statement' for our community that has grown out of these discussions and discernment.

I think that asking the question indicates a Massive concern here in Australia. I believe this has been brought about by the events that reduced the trust that God's people held in those given the role of guiding us in our faith. I think that God wants us to be faithful to the Church that grew from Judean beliefs into the Church that had its beginnings with the followers of Jesus. He taught us God's wishes by his example and teachings. Everything else is surplus and has been created by man, much of it delusional, in their belief that they were being led by God.

Non-judgemental acceptance of those divorced and remarried to make them feel like they belong, not alienated and able to receive communion. That they are able to remarry in the Catholic Church.

I think we are being asked to dismantle ourselves. Amend Canon Law; simplify our actions; seriously look at the Church in its days of genesis. We should not have the Mass as the central evidence of being a Catholic. We should reach out and embrace all peoples. We should feed the poor and needy. IF I Had to define the Catholic Church in Australia I would say St Vinnies, We should provide work for our unemployed; social housing... not remake and rebuild our churches and halls as in my parish. It shames me. We should be able to gather in parks, on beaches and headlands and celebrate Mass... let the public see, join in. Let us be proud. Again, I say we need to grow in a social sense. Mass is just a sacrament for the good of us but social justice and having a working conscience are also JUST AS IMPORTANT for our salvation. Bring in the women and homosexual communities. Just let us BE like Jesus.

He is just a fairy tale.

We all need to be accepting of all people in our Church. Each person has value. There are many differences between people and we need to listen to each person's story of life and invite them to come and be part of God's Church which is inclusive. There are many different people including adults, children, people of all ethnic backgrounds, migrants, refugees, divorced people, gay, lesbian, transgender, those from a different religious faith, etc.

To be more robust in our accountability to the society we serve. For clergy in particular, following proper processes is very important, particularly when crucial legal issues are involved. I suggest

that clergy be encouraged to follow a clear standardised format in obtaining details relating to any serious reportable crimes brought to their attention, either within the sacrament of Confession or elsewhere. I think this would be helpful, since they can be 'caught on the hop' or feel overwhelmed when very rushed and someone reveals something of a serious criminal nature to them. It would also help priests on loan from outside Australia who may be struggling with the language, culture and legalities here. Perhaps a card could be issued that clergy could carry with them and practise, and would contain the following questions or ones similar to these: 'What precisely happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was involved? How many times (or how often) did it occur? Has it been reported to the authorities? When and to whom?' 'As members of both Christ's community and the broader community at large, we all have a responsibility to work for justice and healing. Would you be willing to repeat that information to me outside the sacrament of Confession (if it is reported in Confession)? We need to report this information to the authorities as soon as possible. Would you like to be with me while I ring this information through, as you may be able to help with any other relevant details? I assure you the Church will do whatever it can reasonably do to support and assist you during this whole process'.

Australia is an affluent country. If Catholics could be encouraged at Christmas time and birthdays to consider just giving cards and/or their time to loved ones, rather than expensive material gifts, and at least part of the money saved was donated to reputable charities, a huge amount could be done to help the poor people of our world, many who are struggling just to survive. This is not to suggest parents shouldn't give gifts to children who are not yet earning an income and therefore may not be able to buy things for themselves. But adults often feel pressured by convention to give substantial material gifts to partners and other adults, relatives and friends, and expect something equivalent in return. This can create a huge financial burden at Christmas time for families with mortgages and produces a lot of waste due to packaging and gifts of things that people may already have or simply do not need. We need to consider the implications of *Laudato Si'*. The Church could show some leadership in this regard. Priests could request that parishioners not give them any gifts for Christmas and if they'd like to give something, to donate it to the poor, and suggest adults agree to exchange good wishes or perhaps a simple meal together, rather than feeling obliged to exchange expensive material gifts, and instead give something to the poor. The teachings of St John the Baptist, St Basil and Church fathers would all support this principle.

To heal. Heal our fragile planet. Heal its people. Heal the harm caused by centuries of misguided religious ideology that has led to war, the death of millions and contributed to the exploitation and abuse of millions more. An immense healing is needed.

To love God and to love our neighbours (more detail on how I see this will be in my additional material at the end of this submission).

I believe that God is calling us to be a holier Church. Social justice warrior rubbish, contrary to the mission of the Church (i.e. go therefore and make disciples...) has become the forefront of the Church, not only to the detriment of the Church's mission but also to the detriment of the noble celebration of the sacraments instituted by Christ and the faith of his people. I believe God is calling us to re-centre our lives on serving him through living out our great commission—evangelising, and bringing the multitudes to Christ away from our degenerate, secular world. Too

many are falling away. I don't perceive many of the "social justice warrior" viewpoints as bringing anyone to Christ—we however through these actions are bringing Christ to the people. There is more, however, than bringing Christ to the people. We must bring the multitudes to him. This missionary disciple viewpoint is a holy one, and the great commission must be reinvigorated in the faithful. Á la the New Evangelisation phenomenon which has been a great success in some parts of the USA, but has been poorly implemented here. A refocus on beautiful and dignified celebration of the liturgy is essential. A banishing of banal music from the liturgy and a restoration of Gregorian chant and the organ and even sacred polyphony is a must. Gregorian chant having pride of place was called for by the Second Vatican Council. This music is noble and holy and should be returned to its rightful place. Liturgical abuses must be stopped—priests altering the Mass to suit them or celebrating in manners undignified. Celebrating priests must remember that they act in the person of Christ when celebrating Mass. Beautiful and dignified celebration of the sacraments, especially the Holy Mass is indeed holy. Guitar music, pop inspired lyrics, etc. is not well suited for the Mass. It may be suited however for other celebrations of worship outside of Mass, The LOTH—the universal prayer of the Church—goes largely unnoticed and a greater awareness of this amongst the faithful will most certainly lead to an increase of grace and holiness. The formation of holy priests must be a priority if we are to sustain and guide the faithful in lives of holiness. A reinvigoration of sacrificial giving to support our priests and Church must also be awakened in the faithful.

To be more considerate of safety and hygiene issues in our administration of the sacraments and sacramentals. For instance, in some churches the water in the baptismal font is rarely changed, and some priests pour this water over the infant's head so it flows back into the same water. Bacteria and fungal skin infections can be passed on by this means. You only have to look closely at this water in some churches to see the hairs and other particles in it. I'm sure priests would not want this water tipped over their own heads. Then there are the holy water stoups. These need to be cleaned and the water changed regularly to reduce the risk of cross-infection between individuals. In some cases, the water feels greasy from algae growing in it. Very stale hosts of the Blessed Sacrament accumulating in the bottom of the ciborium in the tabernacle are not just a potential health risk, but undermine the dignity of the sacrament. If a parishioner or visitor to a church (and many non-Church people attend baptisms) was to query these issues with Safework Australia or Workcover, and samples of contaminated water was taken away for testing, the reputation of the Catholic Church would undoubtedly suffer and penalties may result.

Firstly to be patient. Many improvements/revivals in the Catholic Church over the centuries came from new movements inspired by the Holy Spirit. Secondly to listen. Much wrongdoing in our present society is very apparent if we revert to "first" Christian principles. Homelessness, poverty, inequality, greed, selfishness is all around us without seeking similar environments overseas. Thirdly we need to act: The Church and its members are too institutionalized and divorced from what is happening in our own neighbourhoods. We are NOT doing or acting like Christ would have done and in fact what Christ is still today wanting us to do. I think Pope Francis is making a definite leap in this direction.

<p>Teachings from God have never changed over the millennia, just one's interpretation to the remaining evidence left behind. Keep it simple, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Until this can happen, treachery will continue amongst humans.</p>
<p>Mass repetition, sermon too long, listen and be kind to each other, keep the faith, keep up the rosary.</p>
<p>Australian Church should take up the prophetic role seriously. Fight for religious freedom to proclaim the good news to the children of our schools and colleges. Just because we receive the funding from government they cannot force us to teach some things which is not in conformity with Catholic teaching. More emphasis and strategies should be there for the faith formation children and young people. Any attempt to reduce Church into a secular organisation should be resisted. Empowerment of laity should be promoted but not clericalism of laity. Church should have more media presence to counter the biased media and present truth to the people.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to utilize the technology we have to creatively cater to our priestless future in this large land of ours. Daily and weekly Masses to be streamed in each diocese from the Cathedral/church. These to be available at Mass times with the reserved sacrament for distribution, the homily to be a true catechesis for the congregation or allow layperson to present, Married committed Catholics to undertake the non-pastoral work of running a parish—providing budgets, cash flow and profit and loss reports to a diocesan accountant. Women to be allowed to minister at Baptisms, Funerals and Weddings. The third rite of reconciliation to be used as needed. Religious women and families to have a greater role in forming students for the priesthood. God made us equal therefore women's role in our Church should be seriously studied to allow this equality to flourish in the Holy Spirit. Women should be encouraged to undertake study for the diaconate to work alongside current deacons, women are NOT second class citizens—who stayed at the Cross? Could we truly examine a phone link confessional? This could be the 4th rite and its anonymity may draw many back to the other rites—could also be used similar to Lifeline, but with the sacramental focus. I believe God is asking us to be other-focused through Jesus and with the Holy Spirit, therefore, a greater examination of the GIFTS available in our Australian Church, less focus on legalities and more on Love. Team Building in our parishes without priests, the ordination of women and greater inclusion of the marginalised.</p>
<p>Respectfully, I believe that God is asking the body of Christ in Australia at this time to do what he has always asked His Church to do, REPENT. He wants a repentance that is as full as any in Biblical history, full of fear of God's wrath and pleading for his unending Mercy.</p>
<p>To listen to young people, make Mass more inviting for the young people, exciting, dynamic.</p>
<p>God is asking the Church for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Humility: to admit the depth of failure regarding the abuse of children within our Church. No more covering our backs, no more minimizing the role clergy played in enabling the ongoing abuse of children. Clericalism was a key perpetuating factor in the abuse of children within the Catholic Church and so many other churches. 2. Courage: to make big changes. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the exclusion of women from priesthood is not in keeping with the Gospel and cannot be justified. Humility also

that the Catholic Church carries one aspect of the Truth and beauty of God. Other Christian churches carry different Truths, as do other religions. To recognize this does not dilute the value of our tradition and our unique role in the history of Christianity.

3. Generosity: Our primary responsibility in terms of our resources (buildings, personnel, institutions) is the wellbeing of the poorest of the poor. That's our overarching KPI: that every decision made at a parish and diocesan level regarding any aspect of our finances / resources needs to better the wellbeing of the poorest of the poor.

To empower the laity to become more engaged in God's Mission

Open the doors. Be inclusive love open the way to welcome refugees, those different from us. We can be the answer to others' prayers. Our job as Australians is to welcome, love, include. We have been so blessed as a nation, that has come from God, and we are responsible to share that blessing. Any fears that are associated with being welcoming to others can be laid at Jesus feet. God knows what we as a nation struggle with, and God also knows how to help and direct us.

I sense the following invitations:

A. Humility—

1. To begin (continue) the process of decolonising place, person and process as an Australian Church.
2. To begin healing from experiences of abuse and trauma committed under Church auspices.
3. To recognise and accept that the Church is undergoing major change; some (possibly all) aspects of the current Church structure are dying; the Church will look and feel very different in 50–100 years.
4. To recognise and integrate the deep wisdom in other spiritual traditions most especially Indigenous traditions.

B. Embrace the Feminine (Sophia, Wisdom)—

1. Not only in the practical task of admitting Catholic women to the diaconate, priesthood and episcopate but also;
2. Learning from Jesus' profound engagement with women and especially the spiritual mastery demonstrated by the character of Mary Magdalene (First among equals) not only as found in the canonical gospels but also in texts such as the Gospel of Mary Magdalene and the Gospel of Phillip.
3. The Church has been under this calling or leading for many decades now and has for the most part stubbornly refused to follow.

C. Enter Contemplative Silence collectively and individually—

1. Recognise that liturgy, Eucharist, Scripture, homily and tradition ultimately arise from and reside in the Great Silence.
2. It will be the Laity who increasingly carry the prayerful Silence of Christ in their hearts as religious orders and monasteries die out.
3. If this silence is not allowed to breathe (i.e. more than a minute here or there, occasional Holy Hour etc.) the Church risks losing all creativity and wisdom and thereby all relevance.

<p>D. Address the dynamics of power in all Church processes (most especially as a response to the recent Royal Commission)—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the Church is serious about processes of contemplative dialogue it will ensure that its decision-making processes, that are generally confined to certain roles, genders and hierarchies, will also be profoundly influenced by this contemplative ethos with the demands this makes on how human power is expressed. 2. The Church must not only redress the abuse that has come into light more fully but actually do the necessary deeper work of reflection and action. That is to say, as a matter of urgency: identify and change unjust power relations at all levels that support coercive, non-transparent, violent and exploitative power expressions and which almost certainly are still present in current Church structures. 3. Address the 'yawning gap' between expressions of mature, mystical, deeply interconnected, cosmic and wise Catholicism and rigid, power driven, underdeveloped and ego-centred Catholicism. 4. Divisive societal issues such as abortion, gender, sexuality, birth control, divorce cannot be and will never be addressed adequately from within the latter mode of consciousness.
<p>In terms of the Catholic Church in Australia—God is demanding that I should encourage the Church to follow more closely the example set by Jesus. As such it needs to be more inclusive in terms of women, homosexuals and non-Catholics. All should be offered the opportunity to celebrate the Mass and take part in the Eucharist in full. The Catholic Church's reputation at present is at a very low ebb and it needs to "Born Again" in the sense that as part of a modern technological age where woman have for the last 50 or so years been able to prove they are more than capable of engaging fully and in fact leading companies, churches and in fact countries. Just as Jesus needed to challenge the narrow minded concept of worshiping God the Pharisees held with their obsession with technical ritual based on Mosaic law so the Catholic Church has stubbornly refused to make changes to suit the needs of 21st Century. Australia Catholic Church must be brave and lead the world in addressing the challenges of modernity with Jesus as its role model.</p>
<p>Celebrating and developing the Church's inclusivity of all people focusing on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accepting and supporting families and community 2. Our priests and leaders being truly more representative of the lay community (including married and female priest acceptance.)
<p>To be tolerant, understanding, accepting and welcoming of ALL—especially the marginalised.</p>
<p>Being Neighbourly—Forgiving, Understanding, Open, Accepting.</p>
<p>To reflect, learn from mistakes of the past, take responsibility and to look at what we can do to be more inclusive witnesses.</p>
<p>To Promote Inclusivity to ALL and let inclusivity be the foundation of everything in the Church.</p>
<p>General agreement was that to recreate the community of God's people was needed and perhaps achievable by aiming to re-establish relationships and connection between people, between</p>

people and their beliefs. Premise of discussion is that people are fundamentally good and want connection with one another and with God/spiritual self.
Be prepared to step outside the usual and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us on a new path. "Speak Lord, Your servant is listening".
To open our hearts and minds to ALL in our community without prejudice and discrimination (i.e. people on the margins of society; isolated and lonely). Clergy to be more 'visible' among those groups. For Communities to be prayerful. For our Church to offer activities to a broader community in the Church itself i.e.: concerts, musical activities, choral society, orchestras.
Steer clear of approaches that cause division. Be inclusive. Wants us to be kind and look after each other. Care for vulnerable people. Welcome everyone to table. Fight against injustice, discrimination, cruelty. Care and patience. Allow priests to marry. Timetable events etc. with people in mind, not simply the clergy. Promote the essential message of Christianity that gets tied up in crap. Be more open to different views. Life is busy. Acceptance and inclusion. Reflecting and employ other people's views. Practical acts of kindness. Try to help people. Address consumerism. Exclude those who act contrary to the Christian view. Unity in diversity. Need to be true to the message. Need to justify decisions. My job. Time of bad things—drought, politics—but also potential for good. Discussion happening that challenges the Church and there is the opportunity to rethink how we do things. Church doesn't make it easy to belong. Puts up barriers. Inflexibility. Stop putting self on pedestal. Training in psychology and counselling. Social justice rather than self-interest. Act in the spirit of the Gospel. Be Christian. Looking for better methods—adaptation. Move with the times, not rules/regulations. Get out of people's bedrooms. Caught up in individual issues, examine global issues. Don't become fundamentalist, happy/clappy. Engage women and the disadvantaged. Diversity not conformity. Admit and address problems with clerical model of leadership, promote what it does well, admit what it does wrong—liability is an issue. Vest more power in local Church. Emphasise community. Listen to people. Be open to reflective meditation. Listen to people and what they want.
Follow the fruits of the Spirit. Be kind to people, help people. He is asking us to forgive, to be patient, not get angry. Use resources wisely, stop polluting the ocean.
Solidarity in the face of attacks from both outside and inside the Church. If we believe that the Church is the living body of Christ, then we should naturally have respect for it, its tradition (the fact that it can be historically traced back to the first apostles). I think first and foremost that God is asking us to live our faith in Christ by participating in the living Church, through both frequenting the sacraments and sharing our faith and how we live it. In my community, the movement [-], the sharing part is fundamental (through communion we are liberated). In weekly meetings we prepare by reading a document or book as indicated by the movement's leaders, which we then discuss or ask questions about, but above all relate how what we read is relevant to our reality. We follow a method which was outlined by the movement's founder [-] over 60 years ago. I think that encountering Christ in my daily reality is the only way I can keep my faith in Him alive. To recognize His presence is a grace which is the fruit of my prayer and of being open to all experiences. The experiences of liturgy, sharing faith with friends and dedicating my time to acts of charity are what keeps my faith alive in this secular society. This is what God is asking of

me. What God is asking of us is, as I said in the first sentence, a visibility as people living life 100-fold directly because of our faith. Others will encounter the way we live our lives; some will perhaps be unprejudiced enough to be curious and even find time to look further into what they see. This is the method Jesus used with those He met.
A better spiritually educated adult membership of the Christian Church.
<p>The Church needs to draw the youth to attend Mass and participate. The Church needs to be attractive and RELEVANT to the young. The use of Social and other media would help. The Church is competing against football and other sports on Sunday. We need to make the Mass livelier. Charismatic Mass and youth Mass are to be encouraged. We need to make holiness and love attractive in a world which is so challenging for young people.</p> <p>The Church needs to make changes. We need to show that we are a Church of love and we are worth the effort. Some of our history identifies us as hypocritical, e.g. child abuse, abuse by clergy with wealth, the Church appearing like a "cliquey club" snobbery without the love. Lots of criticism of parishioners which turn them off and they do not return to us.</p> <p>The Church needs to change by welcoming all who come to Mass. Sinners need to be treated as equals as they are in the eyes of God, they are basically outcast by the Church. The issues are those of Holy Communion which by Church law must not be received by sinners. This law is unenforceable as we are not questioned when we receive holy communion. The main issues are use of contraceptives, people who are divorced and couples who have been together for years but are not married. The Church needs to change its attitude on birth control within a committed couple. Annulment by the Church is lengthy and may not be granted even though it was the parishioner's partner who wronged in the marriage. I would love to see the Sacrament of reconciliation used instead of annulment to enable these good parishioners to "move on" and have a happy life to someone else. They may have been in an abusive relationship or their spouse was unfaithful. The priest would be able to bless the new couple who are faithful to one another and for that should be able to receive Holy Communion.</p>
Our group favoured inclusiveness ... being the face of JESUS to each other.
To learn (anew if necessary) to prepare homilies (ideally in consultation with lay parishioners) that actually speak to the lives and faith of their hearers, that really motivate them to live the gospel in their daily lives.
Kindness, forgiveness, strength, accountability for those who have taken advantage of others through positions of power e.g.; appropriate action by Church on paedophilia within/ committed by those within the Church. Relevance in today's community. Understanding of today's demographics, female priests and the ability for priests to be married.
Better pastoral care.
I think God would want his Church to uphold justice and especially in Australia, a fair go. At the beginning of all church meetings we should acknowledge Aboriginal Elders, and the fact we are meeting on Aboriginal land after all, all land "owned" by the Church has been stolen from

Aboriginals and if it was a fridge or a car, it would have to be returned to its rightful owners. I attended a Catholic school from kinder to LC and Aborigines were mentioned about three times. Where has the Catholic Church been while about 500 Aboriginal people have died in custody? There has even been a Royal Commission with 300 recommendations and still nothing has been done. Where was the Catholic Church when a Mr Ward was cooked to death in a Gov. vehicle on his way to remand in WA? Where was the Catholic Church when Ms. Dhu was detained in Police cells for non-payment of fines on a Friday in WA and after complaining of chest pains twice and twice assessed as being fit to be in custody, was found on the third day very ill, dropped on the concrete floor, before being taken to the hospital in the Paddy wagon and died about two hrs later. The WA coroner said the police were guilty of inhumane treatment but was lost for words about the treatment of staff at Port Hedland Hospital. The Catholic Church did not have anything to say even after I brought this situation to the attention of the [-] of the bishops Council and asked for a comment! Where was the Catholic Church when an Aboriginal woman presented herself to Tumut Hospital 18 times with stomach pains and was sent away with two Panadol on the last time and died several hours later. The Catholic Church could not have prevented any of these "murders" but while it is silent they will occur again and again and again. And this is the 21st Century! Maningrida, NT, is the World's worst site for the very preventable disease, Rheumatic Heart Disease. Should Australia be proud of this finding? Where does the \$30billion spent on Indigenous Affairs each year go? When will the Church say something? The Church was not always so silent. Bishop Polding had lots to say in the late 19th century on the treatment of Aborigines and their dispossession from their land but like many other references, I did not hear about his views while at Catholic school. The Church must have a strong view and stand up against discrimination, racism and injustice. And after teaching on a Cattle Station in the [-] in 1970, I have witnessed many incidents of the above as I was in 'the business of creating black fellers'. [-] Church, [-]

To be more open and transparent in all aspects of faith and our Christian beliefs and practices. To have more continuity between Rome, the Dioceses, bishops, priests and the general laity, worldwide in line with the Vatican II protocols. Acknowledge the wrongs of the past, accept responsibility and make reparation to those that have suffered.

At this time in history it is imperative the Church abandons the ongoing ambiguity associated with the concept of the 'Real Presence' of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Fundamental to Catholic doctrine this might be, but the progression of Science as a resource to the Church necessitates all attribution of the changing of Bread and Wine to the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to be nonsense to an educated world. It is presented as no different from Magic, and that is offensive to people's real sensibilities. It is asking us to suspend rational thought. It invokes a special level of magicanship to the priest at the point of Consecration. Many priests use very careful phrasing when proclaiming on this matter. Pussy-footing is another description. People accept with graciousness whatever is said, but it seems to me that internally most are not 'true believers' in transubstantiation. Amongst those who might be deemed 'true believers', I have witnessed discussion on whether the bread is acceptable to those with Coeliac Disease. If the Bread is no longer bread, it should be acceptable! While this might be an extreme example, it nevertheless has occurred and is symptomatic of a charlatanism unbefitting the contemporary Church. You will

not have any younger people to talk to if this sort of doctrine is continued beyond the Plenary discussions. The alternative is straightforward and certainly not a new thought for this submission. The Community, the Body of Christ, the Church, have a Christ-consciousness that transcends the material playing with words. The Eucharist can and must be de-shamanised and rendered totally Symbolic as a Community Thanksgiving for the Life, Death and Teachings of Jesus Christ, The concept of transubstantiation is theologically unsound and needs to be jettisoned. The 'Real Presence' is symbolically something entirely different and entirely more acceptable and entirely more uniting for all peoples.

EQUALITY, Jesus Christ did not discriminate on the basis of gender or orientation, or life's circumstance. Neither should the Church.

1. It is a squandered opportunity should this Plenary Council conclude without elimination of all obstructions to the priesthood on the basis of gender or marital status. Relevant Church-made decrees can be dismantled without one jot of impact on the underlying Good News of Jesus Christ. Some of the Apostles were married. It seems like cherry-picking to say there can only be male priests on the basis that the Apostles were all male. Then decree that priests can't be married even though some Apostles were. Equally, there are ample historical accounts of the foundational roles of women in the early Church. To bar women priests is an anachronism, certainly discriminatory in a way unbefitting of a Church in the name of Jesus Christ, and in my view the Holy Spirit would not be asking us in 2020 to continue this discrimination.
2. More broadly speaking, the Church needs to get out of the bedroom. It has no mandate to speak authoritatively on sexual matters and has shown itself to be no better than the community on average in its adherence to its own proclamations. Human beings are human beings and should behave like the human beings we are with the feelings and thoughts God created us to have. Beyond that, the individual's conscience and personal relationship with their God is the determinant of morality, not impositions from 'authority', with all respect. Teach what it is to be human, not how to behave. In this category I also include the antiquated teaching on contraception. After 50 years on the theme, one can only conclude that the Church has monumentally failed in convincing people of the merits of its stance. Why would that be if not because the stance is wrong. I hasten to add that contraception is a universe apart from abortion. The former is potentially simply the prevention of life, which is a conscience or pragmatic matter. The latter is the taking of life, which goes beyond conscience alone as it can have a myriad of complications regarding circumstance. Inequality and unjustifiable decrees in the face of science and evidence are but some of the reasons young people remain unaffiliated with the Church.

To be humble, inclusive and adjust our commonly held image of God as a punishing judge and fulfil our Baptismal duty and privilege to spread God's love.

The Holy Spirit spoke to us in many ways but we will focus on the children/youth and young adults.

- * Find a way to make the Church relevant and exciting to the children/youth and young adults.
- * Reforming/improving children's education. Perhaps have a children open day at church, for all. Invite schools etc...
- * Confirmation and Holy Communion. The children need to be older to fully understand the

greatness of these Sacraments (say about 5 to 6 class).

- * Young children don't know me. They need nurturing at home, school and play.
- * We must not criticize the children/youth and young adults.
- * To pray for each other to bring the young people back to the Church.
- * Be more welcoming to our youth.
- * I want to see a Church that excludes no-one. The young can't identify with the Church as it is.
- * Parents do not go to Mass so the children cannot learn about me. In the heart of the family.
- * We need to have a ministering priest to explain all the meanings of the Commandments. I feel most young people of today don't seem to know them as they are not taught in schools today.
- * Pray for growth in Catholic schools. Catholic schools can provide the foundation and formation of the children and youth.
- * Can we consider more Charismatic Masses, Communities and worship as a livelier way forward being attractive to the youth and young adults
- * Not judge people.
- * Use social media as a way of attracting the youth. Encourage the youth to choose a holy life in a world which is challenging and often unfair.
- * Need to see the successful aspects of the other churches and use these to attract people to the Church if it can be beneficial.
- * Confessional needs to be viewed as less threatening. To introduce the second rite of reconciliation.

This is the second submission. Our first submission focused on the main message of the Holy Spirit being children/youth and young adults. This second submission provides the remaining messages we believe are words from the Holy Spirit

- * That each of us listen to the other and bring God back to the centre of our lives and Church.
- * Be the people God wants us to be.
- * We, the Church need to become a "breath of fresh air" in a world which has so many challenges and negative happenings.
- * Come back to me.
- * Many have forgotten me their God. Who gave them the world to live in? People don't seem to care about looking after it, only abuse. Need to care about the environment etc.
- * The image of the Church and Jesus needs to be that of love not—The paedophiles
 - we are cruel to divorced people.
 - we are cruel to non-married couples who may or may not have children.
 - we are often cruel to sinners.
- * Caring more for our environment. God's gift to us all.
- * More respect for our priests. As without them we wouldn't be able to receive all the gifts God wants for us. We are fortunate to have these priests. What does it mean to be a good Catholic? Do we have to follow the leader priest/bishop etc. or can we belong by following Jesus? If we want to see our children back in church something has to change.
- * To pray for our priests so these good priests can remain true to their teaching.
- * Social justice. Show your love for me to others by your actions and words.
- * We need Charismatic Masses/retreats to help replenish our spiritual needs for all ages. May need assistance from outside priests who are active in Charismatic praise and worship to assist

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Be bold and grow your Church * Be mindful of those who have been badly treated by the Church * To keep the faith while things are not so good in the Church. * To pray for our foreign priests, to accept them and give them a fair go. Without them we have no priests at all.
<p>1) Without in anyway diminishing the importance of the 2nd Rite of Reconciliation, could the 3rd Rite be considered?</p> <p>2) Could the theology surrounding the reception of Holy Communion be revisited with the thought that there may be circumstances when inter-communion between the Christian churches might be permitted?</p>
<p>Welcome and love one another regardless of beliefs.</p>
<p>Teach us to be tolerant, peace in our hearts and country. Pray for end to violence, oppression and abuse. People from all denominations feel free to attend our Churches, reception of Communion for all. Acceptance and welcoming community.</p>
<p>A group of Yr 6 students believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - everyone should be allowed Communion whether Catholic or not (there was a strong sense that students felt left out). - there should be different activities for children compared to adults. - the church needs more colour. - there should be more opportunities for children to read and do other things. - the chairs at the back of the church should be raised.
<p>The group of Yr 6 students believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Church needs to connect more with them and not be so boring. - there needs to be more colour in the church. - the Church should acknowledge Aboriginal people and God's land. - the church space is not as welcoming as it could be. - children should be more involved in what happens during Mass - Mass should be more exciting - women should be allowed to be priests
<p>The group of Yr 6 students believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mass should happen less so people enjoy it - there should be opportunities for listening to each other's ideas during Mass - priests should be rotated around - There should be women priests
<p>A group of Yr 6 students believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Church needs to be more interactive for children - each week the priest should give our community a topic to fulfil each week
<p>This group of Yr 6 students believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Church should be more environmentally active

I sense that God is asking us, each in his/her own day-to-day living and work/mission, to do God's loving of us, as Jesus as has manifested God-Loving; and as Jesus asked of us: "Love one another as I have loved you; by this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." (John 13: 34–35) We have been promised the Spirit's presence all our days that we may do the loving.

To give thanks to God with a grateful heart for all He has done for us. To go in Jesus' name, to share His freely given Love, so that others will come to know Me too. To go in His strength and power to spread The Word. To listen to the Holy Spirit and listen to each other with open minds and hearts. To communicate. To sing praises to God and pray in intercession believing that we will be heard and answered. To spend time apart in His Presence allowing Him to transform us. To turn away from our idols and return to the Lord our God, with words of confession and repentance for our sins, trusting in His Grace, His Mercy, His Healing Power and Love (Hos 14:1-4). To pray that eyes of the blind will be will be opened and that the ears of the deaf will hear and the Light of God will shine in the darkness (Is 42:7 AMP). To pray that the Holy Spirit will fall afresh on the people of Australia. To pray for peace on earth, may Your Kingdom come and Your Will be done (Matthew 6:10 CEB). To pray for wise leaders in the Church and in our government who will uphold Truth. To ask God that in His mercy he may set all Australian's free from slavery to corruption, that they may share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. To pray that the Lord will bind us together in unity and love and prayer. To pray that all people will come to know the Truth.

"Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say 'Our Gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion." "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them." (Hosea 14:1–4 NIV)

"To open the eyes of the blind, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon, And those who sit in darkness from the prison." (ISAIAH 42:7 AMP)

"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17 NKJV)

"Pray like this: Our Father who is in heaven, uphold the holiness of your name. Bring in your kingdom so that your will is done on earth as it's done in heaven. Give us the bread we need for today. Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us. And don't lead us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:9–13 CEB)

"that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21 NIV)

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."" John 8:31–32 NIV

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 4:6 NIV

To pray, to spend time with the Lord in contemplation and prayer to personally get to know His Love and Goodness and Merciful kindness for each and all his Creation. To pray in praise and thanksgiving to God (see 1 Thessalonians 5:16–19 NIV). To pray for all the people and pray for our land. Pray that the Holy Spirit fall afresh on the people of Australia. Pray that the Lord will give grace to the people of Australia and bless them. Pray that the Lord's Prayer will continue to be said in our parliament. Pray that we will continue to be able to speak and teach our faith and beliefs to our children both in our homes and in our schools. Pray [that] man-made laws do not prevent us from living according to our faith and our beliefs. Pray that the Lord will open the eyes of the blind and set the captives free, and bring light to the darkness. Pray that for the grace to love God and the love one another. That all the baptised should encourage each other to Listen to God the Father. Listen to Jesus. Listen to the Holy Spirit. To turn back to God in reverence, humility and trust. To read and reflect on The Word and do according to His will. To show loving kindness, respecting and caring for all peoples and all of creation. To witness, by living a Gospel based life, a life of love of God and of your neighbour, spreading The Word by our actions not just words. To share our stories, of our own transformation, of how God has worked in our lives or in the lives of others. To contemplate His Word, as it brings light to the darkness and reveals God's Wisdom, so that we may not be deceived by folly.

Lead theme—Ecumenism:

- Share property and assets—divert more resources to other areas of assistance and use existing structures across Christian Denominations.
- Don't build new churches—religious services or building could become collaborative or shared.
- Offer different perspectives and practices to others—Mega church/Prosperity Gospel.
- Open ourselves to other Christian Denominations.
- Retreat together (across denominations)—priests and parish leaders.
- Open dialogue around receiving communion within different denominations—a particularly big issue for interfaith families—sends a poor message to children who witness this segregation. Individual priests make decisions based on their own persuasion, a painful conversation. Some priests brainwashed into thinking it is not ok.
- In rural areas many come together under different church/priest rule due to lack of availability—lessons for us times of declining numbers, builds community and is a story of success.
- Working across Christian denominations also encourages working across cultural lines, a blending of culture. Walking into another denomination can be as difficult as going to a Mass in another language. Doable but a challenge.
- Explore the relationships different Christian denominations have with Saints.
- Basic rules apply across denominations— all come together under a love of God.
- The divide of Christians needs to be bridged— events to bring back together.
- We are not here to judge, and nor should Church leaders. Not one way is right or wrong, celebrate the differences through collaboration.
- In the 1960's people denied permission to attend celebrations in other churches.
- All praying to the same God, believing in Jesus.

To take a good look at how we have gone so far away from God and His message. Priests hardly ever teach us anymore, we learn our faith mostly on our own or from our fellow Catholics who are

still faithful. If I did not know that Jesus said His Church would withstand the gates of Hell, I would despair of the hierarchy in Rome right now at the sex abuse summit. They are ignoring the great sin of predation and pederasty on young men, in seminaries and elsewhere. The full truth will be exposed and the Church will be cleansed.

I would like to propose that the Church take a more active role in assistance to parish families in need, by way of setting up a fund for further education, to help people toward a career. The stipulation would be that the young person devotes a number of hours (during holidays) to parish work—participating in Church events—e.g. helping with Sacramental programmes, getting involved with youth programmes. This could be seen as something that provides a good outcome also showing a personal side.

God is asking us to keep the faith and to become more involved with the Church. The laity should be more involved with the parish and help to run it. The priests and the bishops should be more accountable to the laity and have to receive agreement from the laity on all major changes to the parishes.

Confession/Reconciliation and Abuse : Abolish Some Canon Laws and the 'Pontifical Secret' It was saddening that so much political capital and goodwill was burnt for no good reason by the Australian bishop's Conference response to the Report from the Royal Commission on Institutional Abuse. In accepting so many of the Report's recommendations or by referring some of the more gnarly ones to the Vatican, the Conference showed its determination and the seriousness of such confronting expositions. However, in not accepting any possibility of change to the so called 'Pontifical Secret' of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Conference displayed a confounding doggedness to continue holding on to an archaically inflexible tradition. Where is the Holy Spirit in that? While I am by no means neither familiar with nor expert in Canon law, two relevant sections can be cited. Can. 983 “§1. The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason. §2. The interpreter, if there is one, and all others who in any way have knowledge of sins from confession are also obliged to observe secrecy”. Can. 984 “§1. A confessor is prohibited completely from using knowledge acquired from confession to the detriment of the penitent even when any danger of revelation is excluded. §2. A person who has been placed in authority cannot use in any manner for external governance the knowledge about sins which he has received in confession at any time.” It should not and it does not matter whether a priest can do anything or not about what is confessed. Whether that pertains to sexual abuse, murder, rape, theft or other serious matter, transgressions of a major order should not in all good conscience be provided with any whiff of a cover-up. If a person is in fact sincere in repentance, surely they should also be sincere in facing the consequences in civil law. A priest holding on to the above Cannon laws will only contribute to the cover up rather than contribute to the necessary broader healing. If a new Church were to be founded today in the Spirit of Jesus, these Canon laws would surely not pass the draft constitutional stages. In the Australian vernacular, they would not pass the 'pub test'. It is sheer common sense to abolish Canon laws which defend the indefensible and defend the 'Pontifical Secret'.

He is asking that the message being delivered in Masses is relevant to the present day congregation, and that his word be given meaning to people living in 2019 and attending Mass

rather than the people living in the time of Christ. I was at a Mass recently where the priest was giving a homily on marriage and divorce. I looked around the Church, and the average age of the congregation was probably at least 70. Most had already been there, and in fact were grandparents. I sometimes wonder if parish priests are instructed to give certain homilies on certain days no matter who is in the congregation.
Give future direction for growth and relevance.
I believe we are being called to be more loving and less judgmental. LESS LAW MORE LOVE. The Church in Australia is being called to be more about the love of Jesus and less about all the Church laws, rules and conditions. God loves us unconditionally the Church needs to do that too. We need to be a Church of welcome. We need to be a friendly place and a friendly people. We need to shine with joy and love. If we truly live in the spirit of Jesus we will attract others to us. We need to encourage others to live a good life through relationship with Jesus and community. It is through loving acceptance of people today that we will be relevant and a leading light in the world today and tomorrow.
To set an example of care and humility.
For youth to feel needed and relevant to the Church. For specialist youth workers to be employed in every parish. For the specific needs of young people to be met. For Catholic schools to offer appropriate Social Justice experiences For Liturgical involvement of youth to be less of a performance and more of a prayerful experience.
<p>* God is asking us to be a non-judgemental people, people of love, faith and hope.</p> <p>* We must provide for our youth, make our liturgies inclusive of our youth, restructure our liturgies so the youth are given a voice and education in a modern cosmic Church where people of all creeds are valued as children of the one Body of Christ. The style of our liturgies must be more in tune with our modern youth.</p> <p>* The laity must be valued and trusted to carry on the work of the Church in a time when priests are lessening. The priests must "let go" of their power over the laity and realise that the laity are powerful instruments in passing on the faith... for this to happen there needs to be education of the laity by those who also have been educated in modern methods and scripture to be equipped to teach others... this has been happening successfully in non-Catholic traditions for years... they value their people, and this approach keeps the faithful connected.</p> <p>* We must be a welcoming and accepting branch of The Body of Christ... other traditions' outreach are way ahead of "the Catholics" in this area... ecumenism is what it is about and some of our faith family still struggle with this.</p> <p>* Our faith tradition needs to participate more openly in inter-faith education and gatherings to understand better, share with and support more the refugees who are whom have come to share living with us, spiritually and temporally.</p> <p>* Social justice must be addressed... "blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God". The Catholic Church has much to do in catching up with its support for our refugees and asylum seekers. We must become doers, not just talkers. Our youth might not be able to rattle off "the green Catechism" but their understanding of social justice, both locally, nationally and internationally leave us of the older generation way behind.</p>

* Adult Education is a must... how can parents educate their children in their faith if they have slipped through the system? How can our older congregants throw away the unfortunate (man-made) teachings of the past, instilled with fear, if they aren't given realistic education with which to work?

* Education in Scripture Studies and basic Theology are necessary to awaken the older generation and invigorate the youth.

To consider a radical change to the current understanding of the priesthood/Church leadership... To re-think and closely evaluate the practice of bringing priests to Australia from other countries with very different cultures from the Australian culture. To recognise and respect the talent and theological understanding, skills and training of many of the baptised Laity who are willing to take on leadership roles. To recognise and take action against the deep seated and damaging problem of clericalism in the Church. To take a broader view of those whom God calls to 'shepherd' the faithful so that parishes may be offered alternative leaders i.e.: women, married priests, ex-priests, nuns and brothers, married couples etc. The large parish at Marrickville has a married Deacon and a younger priest caring for the parish very successfully.

Greater inclusion of women in pastoral work, decision making and leadership roles. Our pews are emptying. If we are going to be more pastoral we need a new team. Lay people bring a much needed dose of realism. The Church attitude towards women has been one of subordination and still is in some parishes especially those led by priests from patriarchal cultures. This needs to be addressed. Women are now well educated and can be strong voices for change as seen in countries with women in politics e.g. New Zealand and Germany and Ireland. Mary McAleese in her speech in Rome 2018 stated that the advancement of women in the Church was one of the most important signs of the times. Allow women to be ordained into Deaconate and Acolyte roles. The Church must be bold in her internal critiquing of itself. Seminarians need to be directed and taught by women, as well as laymen and priests. There needs to be an end to the monastic type Seminary structures (a 16th century structure). There needs to be frank discussions on celibacy and sexuality.

God asks the Church to read "the signs of the times". Today the people of Australia who look to the Catholic Church (from inside and outside) are looking for a Church that is attempting to address the signs of the times. The inclusion of women as equals at all levels of performance and decision-making in Australian society has increased enormously. The Church appears to be doing nothing that structurally addresses the masculine dominance and clericalization of the Church, not even opening the diaconate to women (the religious orders of committed and educated women could have contributed enormously to this but they are rapidly dying out and the opportunity has been lost). The result is that thinking people consider the Church irrelevant and out of date and out of step in Australian society. With regard to sexual abuse of minors by clergy I believe Australians want the Church to hand over the perpetrators directly to the civil authorities, and to remove from priestly office those who knowingly allow abuse to continue without notifying civil authorities. The Church can address its internal problems in its own internal forum. I think that, despite the growing secularisation and even atheism of our Australian society religion is still generally respected. I believe the Church is being challenged to find new ways to make Jesus and the gospel message relevant by openly embracing the new awareness of the place of the earth

within the cosmos, of the dangers of global warming, the need for responsible conservation, respect for heritage (including its own). New priests need training priests to talk to their people in new and modern ways while in no way undermining the traditions. The Church in Australia does amazing social work. This can be built upon. I beg the Church in Australia to see that the young receive the handing on for the "faith of our fathers". Why do young men and women leaving Catholic schools also leave behind their Catholic faith? In droves. There are new movements afoot to address this phenomenon and the Church ought to spend money embracing them. The loss of the faith—or at least the practice of it—over the past two generations of young baptized Catholics is a sign that something is deeply wrong with the Catholic Church in Australia. Do we have the courage to face this?

Following on from writings of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* 103,104 we believe God is asking of us in Australia today that we genuinely search for ways to make the presence of women more incisive. Of necessity, the bishops need to step up—Pope Francis has made the statement very clearly. We believe he's inviting those ordained to lead, and to advise him, to offer concrete ways for women to genuinely be part of decision-making, informed by the twin pillars of tradition and scripture. After all, women are made in the image and likeness of God! Unfortunately, ordination to priesthood does lead to exaltation and perceived superiority. Formation of seminarians and ongoing formation of priests ought to address this urgently. We believe with women involved meaningfully in the governance of our Church a greater degree of compassion in which Jesus was steeped, would help remove barriers erected by tradition, laws, social customs and personal interests. Going back to the original source of the Christian edifice to hear the voice of Jesus [as] if for the first time; Jesus' care of the suffering, social outcasts and persecuted shows us how to really love God. Women have the ability and aptitude to be the face, hands and heart of Jesus to mirror God to those suffering or feeling unheard, in a way transforming hearts and healing through the Holy Spirit, a type of practical Christianity. More precisely in these fundamentally changed times that: Jesus / God be at the heart of all we do. Our actions towards others be governed by love. We actively listen to the voices of the dispossessed, marginalised and disadvantaged. We actively seek the voice of women in all aspects of the life of the Church. We listen to the signs of the times. We be outward not inward looking. Discernment be the preferred method of operating. Consultation, transparency and accountability govern all that the Church does.

To commit to following the Jesus of the gospels through acceptance; tolerance and inclusivity.

To live a resurrected life instead of a crucified life. To practise inclusiveness over suspicion; joy over fear; compassion over opinion.

To remain loyal and constant while the Church goes through these changing and challenging times. And to believe that God is there with us, guiding and giving us the strength to persevere. To accept the changes that must take place in our faith for our Church to survive. Our Church should embrace everyone and not exclude anyone from reception of the sacraments.

I think God is asking us to be more inclusive of people in our communities. We are supposed to be an inclusive and inviting environment and often it isn't like this in local parish communities I have visited.

What do you think God asking of us in Australia at this time? “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” Mic 6: 8

I think that, what God is asking of us Catholics in Australia today is:

* That we plead/pray urgently, through Christ, that we and the leaders in the Church may accept the gift of humility;

* That we, and they, be led to reflect on the parable of Peter—the Peter who boasted that “even though all become deserters, I will not” and who was then brought by the crowing of a cock to recognise that he had just denied knowing the man from Nazareth three times—and “he broke down and weep bitterly”, before going on and being a true leader of the body of Christ (Mark, 14:26–31; 15:66–72);

* That, as we all stagger under the weight of the evil done by so many who boldly and publicly proclaimed to represent Christ, we actually show the humility and repentance of Peter. This is the most urgent matter which God is asking of us in Australia at this time;

* There is a sense in which we all can acknowledge that we have not been sufficiently vigilant, aware of, or responsive to little cries for help or clues that might have suggested that all was not right for vulnerable people, particularly children.

* That we imitate Christ, the itinerant witness to the love of the Father, in his awareness of people, as individuals, when he crossed their path or they touched the hem of his garment.

* If every one of us were to accept our own little bit of the responsibility given us at our Baptism, to be as Christ to others, then abuse of power would not have become endemic nor a culture of clericalism flourished. Thus there is a real sense in which we all have to accept a little responsibility for what has happened, to play an active role in change and to responsibly refuse to bow before false claims of power over us.

* We all are being asked to wholeheartedly take, as our model, the ways recorded in the Gospels in which Jesus of Nazareth recognised and interacted with people, not adopting the ways and posturing of emperors or those self-righteously bent on controlling others.

* A unique opportunity is being given to the Church in Australia to take up the Cross we have brought on ourselves and to build on the singular mix of peoples, cultures, experiences and charisms within our communities and borders, for a flowering of humility in the acceptance of God’s love and mercy.

To reform our Church, so that it will be a place where the next generation want to be involved.

God is asking us to be faithful to Him and his Church by striving to be holy in our families, friends, work and leisure. The Church provides us with the means to get to heaven and be happy in this world and the next. Daily prayer, avoidance of sin, at least weekly Mass, regular monthly confession and spiritual direction with formation in the faith.

To listen and follow the words of His Son's Mother, the beautiful Virgin. She is pure wisdom, has already provided exactly what the Church needs to do. Right now the Church has been infiltrated by bad people, She is in full serious error and you will not learn this full detail in a short 500 word limited submission. The Plenary Council will fail in their mission.

I think God is asking us to be a community who listens, prays, and walks hand in hand with each other on our journey of faith, with no judgements. Loving one another to the best of our ability. To be listening to each other and encouraging each other.
In light of the SEX ABUSE SUMMIT just finished in Rome, which pointedly ignored homosexual predation and abuse, which constitutes roughly 80% of the abuse cases, please tell me why anyone should take this Synod seriously. The Synod on the family was a barely concealed attempt to soften us up for changes in Church teaching. I for one will stand by the Authentic Catholic Church which Christ founded.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be accepting and non-judgmental of all, recognising we are all one family created by God. To truly love one another and express that love in action. 2. To really live our gift of faith from God and share it in truth and love. 3. To be aware of the prevalence of mental ill health within our country and to be able to offer better understanding, support and help from all members of the Church which will be necessary to counteract the tide of despair and suicide.
<p>God the Holy Spirit is asking me as a Catholic in Australia to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Address sexual abuse by clerics and others in the Church by calling it grave evil to be stamped out by personal struggle to avoid sin, return to confession, personal prayer and criminal prosecution if necessary. 2. To be personally more faithful to Christ with daily prayer, avoidance of sin, regular confession, more frequent Mass and Catholic formation. 3. To bring my family, friends and workmates to Jesus Christ as our friend, God and saviour. 4. To seek sacramental grace in confession or reconciliation, the Eucharist and traditional marriage as taught by the Church. 5. Encourage others to pursue practices that are edifying; yearly retreat, daily mental prayer, monthly Catholic formation, regular weekly reconciliation, more frequent Mass attendance, teaching of Catholic Catechism in all schools.
To be people of faith and hope. To make celibacy optional for priests. To ensure parishes are welcoming communities. To upgrade the role of women and make them part of the decision making processes of the Church. To make the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation available to all. To make the liturgy more attractive, especially to young people. To make the Church inclusive, reaching out the most vulnerable.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The history of the Church is not good—the child sex offenders. Regaining trust of the public will be hard. The Church needs to move with the times, be more accepting of what the Royal Commission suggests and accept this. Crimes should and must be reported to police. Allow Catholic priests to marry. 2. Lack of young families attending Church or recognizing any faith. The Church seems to have stayed 50 years behind, while the world has moved forward to a very different age. Get with the times! Young families are looking for a faith delivered in a way they can relate to—whether through music (modern music—not the old red and green hymn books), community, or an understanding of exactly what it's like to parent or grow up in 2018. Personally I can't relate to a priest preaching about acceptance or equity when the Church is still controlled by older men, not

required to declare admissions of child abuse and with no 'real life' experience.

3. Overcoming the prejudice and shame of historical institutionalised child abuse. The crucial need and relevance of faith (as opposed to religion) for today's society. The stigma that Churches only want people's money. Community based events and programs focused on helping those in need, building relationships with those in the local community and having actions speak louder than words. I believe people care and are prepared to listen to what we know (about God and Jesus) when they know that we truly care about them!

4. Past and present cover ups of paedophilia. Have complete transparency and hold them accountable. I don't mean blame the current clergy, just any that knew or chose not to act, should be removed from the Church.

5. Same-sex marriage and disappearance of families at Church. Teaching the gospel and the truth without change to the truth. Spread awareness about how a Christian family should look. By showing the love the passion and the success in the family. More Church meetings than just the Mass. So more people can come to Church for different reasons.

1. Relevance. Be open to change its position after seeking the views of the majority of Catholics in Australia today, not simply adopt a view from Rome. Allow priests the opportunity to marry.

2. The Catholic Church needs to clean up its reputation and stop hiding problems behind Church walls. The Church needs to address the issue of child abuse honestly. I think The Catholic Church needs to modernize its way of thinking to make people come back to the Church. The Catholic Church need to come to the people do the groundwork and walk up and speak to the community and physically help the community be out there.

1. Terrible acts from priests in our country have damaged many in our community. The cover up's are equally as bad.

2. The celibacy issue hurts the Church in other ways. Considering that priests are asked to opine on every day matters that impact their communities, isn't it strange that priests are not permitted to marry and have children? These are among the most important and problematic aspects of life, and thousands of unmarried men without children are dispensing advice on these matters.

3. Women in the Church. There is no conceivable reason why the Church has resisted the ordination of female priests. Most other religions have already begun to accept women. It is shameful that women are not treated equally.

1. Strict checks for priests and limited access to children and young people, as per Royal Commission findings.

2. Celibacy needs to be changed. How can we relate to priests and how can they relate to us?

3. Merit in the Church should not be about your sex. Leadership should be on merit.

4. Staying current/relevant in modern society. More music at church or more upbeat hymns.

1. The stigma associated with historical child abuse, the appearance that the Church has and is trying to cover it up and the associated distancing of many Catholics that don't want to be

associated with this (convenient as that might be).

2. The "old-worldliness" of some Catholic traditions and how this alienates younger generations.

1. The Church needs to overcompensate for the slow to bear acceptance of the historical child abuse. It needs to drive the healing and learnings and not simply appear to be reacting to the rulings of the Royal Commission.

2. The Church needs to embrace other points of view, denominations etc. with an aggressive and proactive approach. The "down the nose" Catholics also need to be discouraged so that people who are trying to find their fit in the Church aren't discouraged.

So the Catholic Church in Australia can both be, and be seen to be, representative of the Holy Spirit working through all the faithful, it would be appropriate that governance within the Church in Australia involve full discussion and decision-making participation of both clergy and lay faithful (male and female). The current situation of it resting primarily with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, is a concern to many Catholics and to Australian society generally.

To encourage widespread practice of contemplation amongst clergy and faithful. Rowan Williams former archbishop of the Anglican Church, Canterbury in his address to the Synod of bishops in Rome in 2012 before Pope Benedict XVI, spoke about the profound connection between contemplation and evangelisation. He said contemplation. "... it is the key to prayer, liturgy, art and ethics, the key to the essence of a renewed humanity that is capable of seeing the world and other subjects in the world with freedom, freedom from self-orientated, acquisitive habits and the distorted understanding that comes from them. To put it boldly contemplation is the only ultimately answer to the unreal and unreal world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit. To learn contemplative practice is to. Learn what we need so as to live through fully and honestly and lovingly. It a deeply revolutionary matter".

The Church needs to clearly and openly state its primary purpose in our society, which is the salvation of souls (the supreme law of the Church) and the significance of this. I say this because some Catholics have lost sight of this and see the Church as little more than a pious meeting place and a caring, feel-good organisation. And so as not to be seen as unnecessarily scaring some individuals, some preachers at Mass are reticent about even occasionally reminding their congregations about the reality of: serious sin, the Devil, Purgatory and Hell. These can be explained to people in a sensitive manner and ought not be regarded as merely outmoded optional elements in our theology. If people aren't reminded of those things that Christ through His sufferings paid the price to save us from, the magnitude of His sacrifice and victory, and the need for people to embrace His grace and forgiveness can be overlooked or diminished. People may not always be comfortable with the truth, but in the long-run they'll respect us a lot more if we are honest with them, just as they will be more respectful of a doctor who gives them a frank diagnosis about an illness instead of speaking in half-truths.

I think God is asking the Catholic Church in Australia to be a champion in the push for change in Rome. The Church needs to modernise by allowing priests to marry, and allowing women to become priests. Clearly, the maintaining of the status quo as under Pope John Paul II, and Pope

Benedict has not worked as we have continued to see Mass attendance numbers fall, particularly with young people. Walk into any Catholic Church in Australia on any Saturday night or Sunday and have a look at the age of the congregation. I am 51 and am one of the young people? I attend Mass every week and believe in the great traditions of the Church and the message of Christ. We do not need to change too much. I have known some fantastic priests over my lifetime, but with all the trouble we have had I believe the issue of celibacy must be addressed. I have a wife and a family and a full-time job and to say that having a wife and family interferes with how I do my job is a ridiculous notion. I believe the Catholic Church is missing out on so many great candidates as priests. Please let us in Australia push for change.

Given that Australia is reputedly one of the most secular countries in the world, that we Catholics are all suffering shame and humiliation after the Royal Commission and the conviction of Cardinal Pell, that our leaders have lost so much credibility, I believe God is asking that this Plenary Council really address the issues that are bedeviling our Church: The scourge of sexual abuse and other abuses perpetrated over the years by Church leaders—If the Plenary Council comes and goes and these issues have not been addressed humbly, sincerely and effectively in a way that helps us all to cope with the pain we are in, it will be mere ‘window dressing’ to make decisions about other issues. Clericalism—even our best pastors don’t seem to realise how affected they and their people are by it. And the answer is not to have lay people take over decision-making in the Church, but for clergy and laity to work together in partnership/collaboration with openness to discerning what the Spirit of God wants, not what either the pastor alone wants or the laity alone want. They have to listen to one another, to the Spirit speaking in the other. The ageing of our parish congregations with young adults having lost any sense of the importance and necessity of community in our Catholic faith. We pour resources into the education of children (when they are still too young to develop mature faith) and do next to nothing for young adults who are at the stage of their faith development when they question what they have been told and could move to adult faith in Jesus and his mission IF they were given the formation they need. God surely is asking us to consider the factors affecting family life in today’s Australia and to work out how, when, where we can best help all the members of our Church to be and continue to be true disciples of Jesus committed to his mission in our world. Lack of formation and motivation of most Catholics to understand their baptismal call and mission to make this world a better place by working with their fellow Christians to bring to this secular country the values of Jesus. Our leaders do not appear to have really incorporated into their thinking and living and preaching an understanding of and commitment to the teachings of Vatican II (i.e. to the values of the Gospel). People do not know or understand the teaching of Vatican II because they have not been given the formation they need to do so. The tendency to put ‘all our eggs into the basket of Sunday Mass’ (important as it is), to judge the ‘success’ of the Church’s mission by Mass attendance, and fail to be creative in considering and implementing other ways to help, involve and affirm the members of the Church in its mission.

I believe God is asking us to forgive, love, help and care for our families, friends and the increasingly marginalised in our society. I am a parent and mother of three beautiful children, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend and a teacher in a Catholic primary school in the [-], [-]. To me, God is asking to try and make Jesus real in all my relationships with the people I encounter. At

times, this is a difficult thing to do but other times, it's incredibly easy especially with my children, family, friends and students. The times it's difficult to make Jesus in the here and now is during conflicts or disagreements but I do realise that's the most important times I need to remember Jesus' words and actions. The terrible child abuse that has occurred in the [-] diocese has created an obvious divide. I truly believe that there are genuine victims of this abuse but I also know beyond any doubt, that there are some who have claimed abuse only because 'there's money in it' (this a direct quote from a man who openly admitted he wasn't abused but he and a mate went to the police anyway). I also feel there are people out to destroy the existence of the Catholic Church in Australia. Cardinal George Pell's conviction cemented this for me. I believe Cardinal Pell is innocent as well as a few (not all) other Catholic priests/brothers in jail for child abuse convictions. I believe and have lived the Catholic faith my whole life but feel spiritually starved. The terrible child abuse is mentioned often in homilies at my local Mass when this is not required. I sometimes avoid going as I don't want to hear about it again and again and again. I feel we need to start afresh, move on (of course to not forget or pretend nothing happened). The protection of all children, women and men is to be a priority.

I believe he wants us to clean up our act. To ask clergy to be responsible for ensuring that all people feel welcomed, that they act like the lay people (humble/kind/human) not better than others, that they include lay people in decision making and feel like it is their Church. I think God wants us to speak up when things are not right in the Church. He wants us to speak up for our beliefs and to look out for people who need us, he wants us to stop the chaos that is happening in our churches and community. He wants us to be responsible and accountable, to take on roles in our Church to show who we really are, do good acts not just talk the talk, but walk the talk. He wants us to put him at the centre and forget the issues that take us away from him.

"WHY?" Catholicism, and indeed Christianity itself is being questioned by the so called modern scientific society. We are continually asked "How can you believe in an unseen spiritual deity with all the evidence that science can produce to explain creation and evolution?" God must be asking "What have I done to deserve this abuse from that which I have created and why has my creation gone so wrong so as to be doing what it is doing both individually and as a community". Therefore I believe that God is asking that we look very closely at who and what we are, to examine our existence, to confess publicly that we have sinned and to remedy those wrongful actions with sincere sorrow and dignity. He is asking that we remedy our faults and introduce policy and procedure that would curb the Church from repeating its previous wrongful decisions actions and display a common and proud belief that acknowledges primarily Love for God himself and generally love for ourselves as both individuals and as Community.

Become a credible witness to the transformative power of the Gospel. Engage the spirit and direction of Vatican II and put into practice with even greater rigour and urgency. Undertake radical, long-overdue change in how live as a community of believers or be judged by our fellow citizens to be a self-seeking, self-referential sect. The Catholic Church has lost any credible voice it may have once enjoyed. It has failed to translate the Gospel into a language that speaks to the hearts of the majority of baptised who no longer attend Eucharist and have ceased any practical affiliation. Marginalised by the Church's judgement on their life-circumstance (often beyond their control and therefore beyond their moral agency), the Church teaching and pastoral practice not

only lack compassion, but have become a poisoned well. The clerical leadership of the Australian Catholic Church need to seek forgiveness from society and from Church members for the scandalous self-serving behaviour of the institutional Church which protected and sanctioned various forms of abuse, including but not limited to child sexual abuse. Do this with humility. Don't heap unbearable burdens on people's backs! The Church continues to perpetrate and tacitly condone abusive behaviour in the form of sectarian pride, clericalism, misogyny, and homophobia. So deeply ingrained are these attributes within the Church that they find expression not only in our mutual relations but find protection in our structures, in how canon law is applied and in pastoral practice. Many parishioners have not grown beyond the faith understanding of their childhood. They are fed on poorly prepared homilies which focus on individual sin, are joyless and encourage individuals to try harder/do better, are anti-intellectual and blind to structural and political inequalities. This constitutes spiritual neglect and abuse. Move from fall-redemption theology; remove dualistic, sin-obsessed and substitutionary atonement theology from liturgical texts and expression. The Church must act decisively and urgently for an integral world ecology. Create and maintain collaborative relationships which remediate environmental degradation, climate change, eradicate poverty, promote justice and deep learning from wisdom traditions of first nation peoples. Abandon former notions of moral or spiritual superiority, sectarian distinctions and messianism. Don't rely on professional social services and formal Church charities only, but make real a renewed preferential option for the poor at all levels of Church by reaching out to those on the margins and putting Church resources at their service. Extend governance to women through meaningful roles with decision making authority. Do away with mandatory celibacy for diocesan priests. Cease the use of honorific and paternalistic titles among clergy, particularly "Father".

The Church is in a state of flux and uncertainty. The "sins" of the priests of our dioceses have had a profound effect on morale in communities where Church is dwindling, so that it represents an aged population or young families of other ethnic origins. God is asking us to look, listen and act. From experience it is difficult to meet the needs of all people in a community, where they believe that they have a voice that will be heard so that they have a sense of belonging within the parish community? People in modern day Australia live extremely busy lives so that their idea of community is not really church community. Their idea of community is also alienated by their individualised lives, where commitment and a sense of belonging is furthest from their minds. This is a complex issue where the focus is on the crucial idea of individual versus community. It impacts on all community groups. God has to be found in all aspects of life not just parish life. As a secondary teacher in a 7–10 Catholic school, we attempt to show that God is real and is an important part of our community. Through witness and example and creating practical activities we find God. I see my mission as exactly what God is asking of me at this time. We are being called to be faithful to the Gospel in everything that we do so that we are authentic. It is not really happening in a parish structure or where Eucharist is the "summit of our faith" during Sunday worship.

I don't know what God is asking of us in Australia so I am more led perhaps by the Holy Spirit to answer what I as a member of the laity want from my Catholic Church in this 21st century. I want a Church that is rooted in the Australian landscape, that reflects its ancient Aboriginal history as

well as its white settlement history. I want to call myself an Australian Catholic where my Church is a simpler, less ornate, more egalitarian community reflecting our Australian culture and our vast landscape. I frankly feel embarrassed by the pomp and ceremony of bishops and especially Cardinals in ceremonies here and in Rome. I think it is time we let the medieval costumes and artefacts go and rediscover the inclusiveness and humility of Jesus. We need another Reformation we need to be shaken to our core. We need to end the reign of clericalism and turn to the People of God men and specially women to renew and revitalise our troubled Church. I fear the shock of the now public revelations re Cardinal Pell even were he to win on appeal are a sign of serious deep flaws and dysfunction within the hierarchy. The Church so needs to be healed and this council is our best chance for truth and reconciliation and renewal. So I hope God is asking us to be honest in our examination of where the Church has lost its way and failed its community, especially the young and the vulnerable.

We began our listening and dialogue by speaking about what is needed in Australia and what is missing. This led us to explore the overarching lack of pastoral care for humanity. This is what our Catholic Church needs to stand for—for the care of humanity and all of creation. Unfortunately, both of the stories we recalled were when the Church failed to connect with our situations pastorally. There unfolded in both of us a great sadness and yet both of us are still connected to our Church and faith is important to us. The time of sharing created for us the space to realise that there must be so many missed opportunities when people do connect without Church and its leaders. What a disappointment when the rules or the lack of time or the lack of relationships or understanding prevent the expression of pastoral care for humanity. This was Jesus' mission to the world in which he found himself and we are called, baptised into that mission. We are being invited to share our faith in action, to make a difference for humanity.

The theme that this group explored was "The Wellspring of Love". Australian society seems to have reached a new low with humans becoming a lot meaner. The stories shared by the participants pointed to their individual needs of being loved unconditionally. That is what the message of Jesus is about, it is about not being judgemental but about opening our hearts with love, kindness, compassion and empathy. We spoke of having lighthouse people in our lives—parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, families who invite us to be bigger and better than our raw selves. The maxim of treating others as you would want to be treated rang true for our dialogue. We identified our need for ongoing growth and formation which comes from that wellspring of love. Many in the group have found this in faith and knowing that no matter what they are loved by a higher being which some of us called God. This calls us to being a better and more loving person. For some this can be found in the Church but it also is a struggle given the present tensions within and from beyond. There was a strong desire to be more generous but that was seen as a possible threat to the greed and selfishness which presently exists and individuals financial sustainability and wealth. In the end, in response to the Plenary Council questions the group determined that the wellspring of love required a return to the basics of—love, giving, compassion and being other-centred.

The responses to the question, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" were varied—about acceptance of all people, the multicultural nature of Australia, the First Peoples of Australia, people of other faiths, the environment etc. When it came to choosing the

theme it emerged quite spontaneously—Compassion and Wisdom is what God is asking of us in Australia at this time. Stories were shared about how in adversity people had shown each in the group such love and compassion, and this did not necessarily come from those within the Church. One of the stories shared the absolute gaze of the Dalai Lama when confronted by an aggressive person in an audience. The person sharing the story had tears in his eyes as he recounted this encounter over forty years ago. What became apparent in the sharing was the alienation which many people find as part of Australian society—apart from the First Peoples we are all 'boat people' who come from another place and call Australia home. This alienation from our place of belonging, which is also the situation for the first peoples creates a loneliness and a desire to belong. By the end of our time of listening and dialogue we think that God is asking us to 'Give people a fair go' which looks like—being inclusive, welcoming, hospitable, caring, listening, responding, reaching out, respectful, recognising the other, social justice, equality, values, justice, compassion, seeking the common good, sharing, developing right relationships, acceptance, encouragement, trust, wisdom and truth. Are we able to achieve such a society in Australia and in our Church? We sincerely hope so!

The law of the Church regarding birth control i.e. contraception needs to be reviewed in the light of extensive work done by one of Australia's most eminent theologians Reverend Doctor Cornelius Brendan Keogh D.D. PhD OAM 13/7/1921–24/11/2011. The work is titled *Three Contending Theologies: Totalitarian, Libertarian and faithfully Developing Catholic*. On behalf of traditional Church teaching. Classical objective Theological method, and the peaceful development of a vital doctrine. This work needs to be viewed by appropriate theologians and either validated or dismissed. Several documented attempts were made by the author to have this work assessed at the Vatican. After much prayer we believe that the Australian Plenary Council is the avenue to submit this document.

When asked the question there were a variety of responses from the deeper dimensions of faith, God and religion, to some of the social justice issues facing us, to a concern for younger people in our society, to a need to spend more time just being present in the present moment, to issues around leadership which needs to be more participatory and collaborative etc. The theme which emerged from all of these ideas was 'Relationships'. What became key in the listening and dialogue and sharing of stories was the place of people's first families—the love and acceptance of those people and particularly those born into families with a strong relationship of faith. For most in the group, they had encountered and continue to encounter inspirational people of faith just at the right time in their journey of faith. Many expressed their connection with a strong community of faith that supported them and cared for them. Some had experienced 'desert-like' communities which were insular and closed and which did not appear to reach out as being of follower of Jesus Christ would demand. The group spoke of the place of listening to God through people, especially in a place where you feel a sense of belonging, being respected and accepted. Words such as loved, embraced, accepted, enmeshed, respected, involved, welcoming, human relationships, authentic and sacredness were used by participants in sharing their story of faith, life or the Church. What emerged was the need for human relationships to reflect the face of God. It is the Spirit who works through people and therefore it is these sacred relationships that must be encountered from the time of birth to when we draw our last breath. Each individual is sacred.

Those in ministry shared their felt sense of being alone because of the presence of the negative or disconnected voices. It is in these spaces that we need to hold onto our relationship with God and with each other. At the conclusion of our sharing time the following emerged: To see the spirit in everyone, love them, keep listening and this may give us a way forward, to keep reaching out. When encountering the Catholic Church we need to be a place of hope and healing, an oasis not a barren desert place of mourning. Everyone needs to be recognised as a sacred person made in the image and likeness of our good and gracious God.

Group 1: Welcoming and caring for those who are marginalized by showing tolerance, empathy, integrity and generosity of spirit. Live out the message of Jesus without political spin.

Group 2; ACCOUNTABILITY—each level is held accountable for implementing changes from unbiased research analysed. INCLUSION—within Catholic schools (communion, blessings for everyone); Churches (taking communion regardless of denomination), therefore being a genuine community. Address the needs of our multicultural society at this time rather than cling to outdated traditional expressions. Listen to the voices of youth and other groups that do not feel they are part of the shrinking institutional Church structures.

Group 3: Relevant to the modern world, building a community that is able to be inclusive of all. Need to connect with youth, such as by using values education in schools rather than the current academic approach. Pursue the true spirit of openness promised by Vatican II. Lead by example.

Group 4: Universal acceptance, including acknowledging the contributions that women make, recognizing LGBT, providing female priests and allowing priests to marry. Take action on climate change, in line with values of stewardship. Be humble, gracious, loving and speak God's truth.

Group 5: Change the institutional structure of the Church so it can relate to modern society including youth, women, the LGBTQI community, displaced people such as refugees, the marginalized, and embrace modern technology such as IVF. Traditional liturgies such as the readings at Baptism ceremonies need to be updated and made more relevant to those present. Church leaders should be from all backgrounds and genders, not just males.

Group 6: Acknowledge the hurts and abuses of the past but look forward to a more progressive and contemporary future including allowing priests to marry, women priests and more inclusive attitudes towards youth, homosexuals, non-Catholics.

Group 7: Hope for Real, Fundamental/Radical Change in the structure, liturgical processes, use of Human Resources in an important move towards a new relevance for a modern world. Make communion open to all. Allow priests to marry and open the priesthood to women. Make the Church accessible to all by removing the patriarchy and prejudice and moving away from the Church being a capital-motivated business.

Group 8: To embrace change and bring the Church into the 21st century. Be more accepting of all people and engage with the youth of Australia. To open our eyes to the needs of others and build a loving society. Admit our faults, apologize, and stop protecting and supporting the paedophiles. To have a personal relationship with Jesus and go back to the principles of the Bible.

Group 9: Become more inclusive, and reach out to groups that have been marginalized by practices of the Church, e.g. divorced, homosexual. Adapt language and music to communicate with youth and make them feel valued and included. Let women be priests.

Maybe God is asking us to strive to live in accordance with the Beatitudes, to love and forgive ourselves and others, and to accept that "love covers a multitude of sins." Maybe God is also asking us to conserve and protect this planet, our natural environment, its plants and wildlife.

To pray and follow the teachings of the Catholic Church get back to basics and stand up and be proud to be a Catholic and teach our children in Catholic schools about our saints and about their obligations also the senior members could benefit from this as well.

1. Ordination of women.
2. Reduction of period of Seminary training for the priesthood.
3. A "new" type of priest: A person who qualifies to consecrate the Eucharist and other Sacraments but who leads a secular life including marriage.
4. Review of Doctrines relating to contraception and papal infallibility.
5. Establishment of limited terms religious "houses" for persons wishing to "serve" the Church's mission without lifelong commitment to celibacy or poverty.

God is asking us to be open caring and to treat each other with respect. To encourage the children and families to deepen their faith. The children are the future of our Church.

I have been fortunate to know Catholic priests who live a religious life and preach the word of God. Trust in priests has been damaged, as is the Church. How to build a Church on deceit and damage? Now we have been told priests did hurt children, the aftermath of which survivors struggle with living their lives, and victims are dead, leaving friends and family bereft. The old men of the Church have lost their credibility in being a one true Church, it is a severely tarnished Church. Shame that a royal commission was required to push the Church to acknowledge publicly its role in abuse of children. The Catholic Church is no different to any other Church that has harboured paedophiles. An advertisement in "Annals Australasia" magazine is asking for help to pay Cardinal Pell's legal fees. Nothing has been learned. Where are the words about survivors and their legal fees. The Church will remain crippled unless its hierarchy acknowledges its failure to protect the vulnerable in the past and show proof it can change for the better in words and actions, again and again.

* I think that God is asking that the Nation of Australia to work for the 'Common Good' using the Beatitudes as a base.

* Australia needs to respect the dignity of each person. When this happens we are doing God's Will. 'Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven'

* In The Government of Australia there is a lack of trust. Politicians generally consider only their own Political Agendas. Politicians need to get back to remembering that they have a Country to manage, not Political Points to secure.

God I believe is asking us to be mindful of those who have been hurt by the Church or Church personnel. Also to be more energetic and learn more about our faith. Many people do not know the basics about our faith and we need to grow deeper in our understanding and closeness to God. We need to be more open to the Holy Spirit and invite it into our lives by being more charismatic maybe more retreats not just diocese retreats but also local retreats in our parishes. We also need to learn to respect and teach more on the rosary as a prayer in learning and meditating on the life of Jesus this can be done via group prayer before Mass, but we need to

change people's thinking that the rosary is a personal prayer not a group prayer as God said where 2 or more are present He is with us.

For his people of faith to be separate to the world while being in the world (Romans 12: 1–2, John 2: 15–17) As people of faith we are called to evangelise to the world and to exercise great caution against the world evangelising the children of God. I believe that God seeks his children to offer Australia the same message of hope that the Lord Jesus Christ offered—We are to follow Christ, the light of the life (John 8:12), and to live the ways of God rather than those of the world (Mark 8:34). This will be unpopular and will result in Christians being targeted (John 15:19). We are to take courage and to stand up for God's Word and the teachings that have underpinned our Christian faith even more so today in our Australian society which is progressively turning its back on our Creator.

To be a prayerful people of faith.

To help in healing the people of faith. There is a lot of hurt and damaged people who need support and love. These people need to know that there are people that can help and that those helping people are accessible, approachable and available for them. Let's not close the doors but swing them open and reach out—Joshua 1:9 "... Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

To receive and welcome all those that the Holy Spirit leads to our Church and to trust that the Holy Spirit will guide them and challenge them to be transformed as they encounter our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 12:2—"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Over the past few years the Catholic Church has been under attack. These attacks on the Church and its ministers can only be attributed to the work of the devil. The Church's priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and the pope are the shepherds that feed Jesus' flock. The most recent event regarding Cardinal Pell has had an enormous impact on the Catholic faithful. But our shepherds have been silent. We have received no comfort or encouragement to remain strong from Jesus' shepherds, either from the pulpit or through the media. The faithful look to their shepherds to lead them and give them guidance in these traumatic times. The family unit is under attack from all directions. When are our shepherds going to speak up and proclaim the words and teachings that Jesus has given us. We are sick of 'so called' high profiled Catholic lay people making public statements contrary to Catholic teachings, such as same-sex marriage, abortions etc.

To be more courageous and vocal, as not just Australia, but the world, are making decisions that are not in the favour of each and every life and detrimental for the next generations growing up in our societies. We need to work together to be strong and stand up for what we believe, to form conferences that work based off of doctrine and real Catholic tradition and represent the Church and all of God's family correctly and with the utmost respect and courage.

Primarily, I feel we are being called, in the words of Pope Francis, to a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ. We are being called to take his words and example seriously, not coloured by agenda or revision, but the gospels as handed down. A true genuine encounter with Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow will transform lives. This transformation will be lived out as 'missionary discipleship.' No longer can we simply be cultural Catholics. Everything about our Church, our people, our structures, our celebrations, our ministries, needs to grow out of the deep transformative encounter with Christ. This means things need to change. This means the culture needs to change. This means the structures need to change. This will involve vulnerability and humility. This will require deep listening to those witnesses in our midst.

For a paradigm shift between the Clerical Church and us lay Catholics. Us adults want to stopped be treated like children and want a new term of engagement with the Clergy and institutional Church. We the people are the Church. We want less law and more love, more action. The Roman Catholic hierarchy imposed by man from the Roman Empire today does not represent to its Christian followers of the 21st Century. In my world as a young woman in 2019 in Newcastle Australia, God is asking me and my community of friends for a world with greater inclusivity (the true Gospel mandate, O'Murchu 2015), kindness, respect and care—for each other and the environment. God does not discriminate. We are taught about his love. John 10:10 I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full. Therefore, I believe it is our man-made Church that is holding the Church in Australia back. We must accept all people including the LGBTQI communities of all people. I believe women are required to play a greater role in the Church, for example, Women priests. The role of Mary and Mary Magdalene are undervalued in the Death and Resurrection stories, and Pentecost. Women are not inferior! Young people experience spiritual and faithful moments in nature and through music. I do. I love attending ACYF and WYD because of the fun experiences I have with people my age—community based. A lot of these amazing experiences at these events were based in music. New fun, uplifting music. For example, Matt Maher at Sydney ACYF during Adoration in the final/closing Mass was so special. The music was meaningful. We want more of this during weekend Masses and Catholic school Masses during the week. Nature is so special to me. Outdoor vigil Mass at WYD in Krakow was so special, each year I attend outdoor Christmas Eve vigil Mass, visiting St Francis of Assisi's Hermitage was such a sacred site for me. So I ask that clergy sincerely consider outdoor marriage celebrations, not just in the institutional Church building.

I think the Church needs to prepare NOW for the time when we won't have very many priests to provide services to the Catholic community. We need to stop thinking that there is plenty of time to do this. There isn't! Things we need to do are:- Allow married men to be priests. Allow women to, firstly become deacons, and then later on to become priests. Allow laity to preside at Baptisms and Marriages. Allow priests to use the third rite of reconciliation without needing special permission. People would then recommence practising this sacrament. If our Church leaders keep insisting on doing things in the stick-the-head-in-the-sand way, and think that all will be OK, then they are stupid. They will be the cause of a catastrophe in our Church.

I think God is asking us to try and involve more young people in our Masses and other Services. The best way to do this is through music, singing and dance. A very good way to involve more

young people to interact with the rest of the community is through Family Alpha, as we all learn from one another in a fun and enjoyable way. I also think that we should have the third rite of reconciliation as more people would participate in this important sacrament. I have been to a couple of third rites and found them to be very beautiful and inspirational. I also think that God is asking us to have married priests and women priests, otherwise we will run out of priests. At the moment, we have a priest supervisor and a parish leader which works very well and our parish has a very strong community feeling.

During the last 6 months I have spoken to about 150 people about what is happening in their lives and this is a snapshot of their comments. I am a young person alienated by my family because of a lifestyle choice I have made. My partner has walked out on me and the children and I do not know what the future holds. I am grieving the loss of a child. I am trying to get my life back on track after being in prison. Of advice they were given by a priest. I am a person in frail health; what is going to happen to me. The above comments demonstrate that people need healing in their lives but really wish to be part of a community where they are accepted for where they are at in their lives. These people would like to reconnect with their God and their faith community but are unsure whether they will be accepted or not based on their situation. Many people commented that they are alienated from a faith community because they were rejected by people in their parishes because they were not part of a clique. People also have left the faith community because of advice they were given by a priest on a moral issue and that had dire consequences on the rest of their lives e.g. one person was told by their priest they had to stay in their marriage despite being emotionally and physically abused in the marriage. Another comment was made that the annulment process in the Catholic Church is extremely intrusive and forces the person who requests the annulment to prove the marriage was not a marriage. Families are broken because of poor communication and selfish lifestyle choices. READING THE SIGN OF THE TIMES. Being part of a parish community is not a priority in people's lives. Most people have extreme challenges in their lives and the Church needs to be aware of this when relating to their needs. Priests are no longer held on a pedestal by people due to the sexual abuse crisis and also by their 'I know what's best' attitude which was conveyed to parishioners. A recent study showed that 80% of marriages occurred outside of a Church setting. Young people do not see the relevance of a worshipping community however have many issues which require guidance and support, e.g. relationships and self-esteem. Many regular parishioners no longer see attendance at Mass on Sundays as an essential part of their week. Women feel alienated in the decision making process in the Church yet make up the greater percentage of people who are active in their parish communities. People are broken through the circumstances of their lives and are seeking both healing and a desire to belong to a community which accepts them where they are at currently in their lives. WHERE TO FROM HERE. It may not be a bad idea to go back to the early Church where people encountered many of the challenges that we face today. They were able to get through these times by working in small communities with guidance from the apostles.

That the people of God have an active role in leadership positions within their parish to seek an end to clericalism between clergy and laity that as a people of God we look to build a community of disciples with each other.

That we follow the 10 commandments better.

It is my belief, after a prayerful reflection on Matthew 5 and Mark 9, that God is asking his Church to simply return to being faithful to the Gospel so as to spread it to everyone with ears to hear. The Catholic Church, and I mean the entirety of it, has become a stumbling block for many people (Mark 9:42) and, if it has not already, is in severe danger of losing its "saltiness" (Mark 9:50, Matthew 5:13). The aim of the Church is to preserve the Gospel and share it. To my mind this is a clear and simple goal and to do it we have to be people of the Beatitudes. Each beatitude speaks of an interior condition and they are all of equal importance. The one least talked about in our times, which may reflect what we are afraid of seeing in the mirror, is a "hunger and thirst for righteousness". People see this now as the goal of "right-wing conservatives" and yet it is crying out for recognition amidst the sexual abuse scandals and corruption that has the Church wringing its hands. Without each of us individually hungering and thirsting for righteousness, without each of us removing the plank from our own eye, we can do nothing as a Church. Righteousness is the act of lifting up our eyes to Christ. "And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Without it, we are weak and can't love God or neighbour. The righteousness of the Saints is what gives them their attractiveness. They lifted their eyes to Christ. Sadly, I don't believe the Catholic Church helps as much as it should in our quest for righteousness, particularly in the areas of teaching and leading by example. The Church is not meant to be so corrupt and so silent. It is fitting that the submission for the Plenary Council closes on Ash Wednesday because we really need to be put to the torch, be reduced to ashes, and come back with a VISIBLY renewed spirit. I direct this message most especially to the leaders of the Church, who are the visible ones in our community, also to the leaders who should be visible but are neglecting their gifts, and to each of us individually in our own hearts and lives. It was the grumbling disciples in Mark 9, trying to be the greatest amongst themselves and trying to stop the deeds of power of others, who elicited those harsh words from Jesus: "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea". That statement wakes me out of my slumber. I pray that it does the same for my Church.

If nothing changes, nothing changes. These words were expressed by a prominent psychologist at a recent conference I attended. Since then I have pondered why these words have continued to percolate in my heart. Recently I have become concerned that the Plenary Council 2020 may be a lovely time for the bishops of Australia to come together but if they fail to respond to the voices of the Holy Spirit in their people and seek to maintain a status quo will see a final Mass exodus from our Churches: if nothing changes, nothing changes—our voice will remain completely mute in a world that needs to hear the voice of Christ in the Church.

I believe that God is asking for a Church entirely centred and modelled on Jesus—on his entirely consistent teachings and behaviour. The multitude of un-Christlike behaviours and attitudes we have seen destroying the Church's health and credibility would then be excised. To assist this we need to distinguish clearly between what is core to our Catholicism on the one hand, and what is cultural and historical accumulation which is better removed (like barnacles from a hull). Clericalism must be one of the first areas to be so treated. We need to seriously evangelise, even most of those who identify as Catholic. Without the commitment that comes from close personal relationship with Jesus, and propels to conscious discipleship, 'members' of the Church will

continue as mere consumers of Church services or just fall away. To this end 'knowing' and loving Jesus in the Gospels and the Liturgy seems paramount. The kerygma must first be proclaimed boldly so that we 'fall in love' with Jesus. I suggest wide use of "Alpha" to aid this, unless something more effective is identified. This should then be followed by catechesis tuned to the needs of contemporary Catholics living in a real world. Well-informed scripture study opportunities utilising contemporary insights need to be provided throughout Australia. Every learning and formational initiative needs to emphasise engagement with all of society (including different religions, philosophies, sexualities, etc.) in respectful and positive dialogue. Acceptance and welcoming should characterise this engagement, contrasting with some of the un-Christlike attitudes which have plagued the past and are still current in some triumphalist attitudes. The Church needs to implement 'positive discrimination' towards women, ATSI members, ethnic minorities etc., at the expense of 'better qualified' people from privileged groups when discerning vocations to leadership in the Church. The messy Church Pope Francis talks of would be in evidence, but it would be better than that which we have at present. I believe we are called to careful consideration of our many corporative ventures—schools, hospitals, nursing homes etc. (services which can be provided by others) to discern if we should divest of these in order to concentrate on our core business which is exclusive to us—evangelising, catechising, celebrating the mysteries of our faith-life etc. Beyond the family, I believe that something like 'extended family communities' are vital for the flourishing of the larger Catholic community in Australia. The geographical parish needs to embrace the community-of-communities pattern where the smaller intimate groups can foster relationships with Christ and one another together, and support ministries and liturgical celebration in the larger community—and stimulate missionary outreach. I believe God wants a Church that concentrates much less on technicalities and more on relationship with God and one another.

To become a more inclusive, pluralistic, welcoming, hospitable, Interreligious, Interfaith, and intercultural society. To accept, promote and encourage more political, intellectual and viewpoint diversity, including dialogue and listening to each other. To have greater acceptance and inclusion of sex, gender and sexuality diversity, To take greater care of our environment, including climate change, river systems , biodiversity, oceans, soil, etc. A deeper and fuller reconciliation with our ATSI population, including social justice, equality of opportunity and inclusion. To have more of a global, compassionate attitude to world issues, including refugees, poverty , the environment. This is from the group I attended and participated in "By the end of our time of listening and dialogue we think that God is asking us to 'Give people a fair go' which looks like—being inclusive, welcoming, hospitable, caring, listening, responding, reaching out, respectful, recognising the other, social justice, equality, values, justice, compassion, seeking the common good, sharing, developing right relationships, acceptance, encouragement, trust, wisdom and truth."

To identify and nurture our uniqueness as a country, a people and individuals.

To be a good neighbour in a global sense as a country and as an individual becoming aware of the uniqueness of others and bringing Christ to or every encounter.

For us to be a fellowship and not an organisation

For change to be enabled from within small communities and not dictated from without and

<p>especially not from "above" in a hierarchical sense.</p> <p># For poorer communities to be supported financially to minister to their own people.</p>
<p>To live with the Principles of Faith, Hope and Charity. To follow Christ's teachings in every way—defining our lives by them. To be Evangelical.</p>
<p>God is asking for peace, love and understanding which involves all the people who have turned away from the Church due to the scandal over sexual abuse, and scandal of the men who were our role models.</p>
<p>ACTIVE ACCEPTANCE that the family of God will experience in our Church community the love of Jesus irrespective of age, ability, colour, religious beliefs, sexual preferences, marital status, gender diversity—being ever aware of the divine commandment "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" Matthew 7:12</p>
<p>City Region Social Justice Group [-] Catholic parish of [-] Responses to Plenary Council Q: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? This S J Group has been operating in the Inner-City parishes of [-], and nearby [-], for more than 20 years. Because of the shortage of priests—and shrinking congregations, 5 of the [-] parishes have been compressed into one—clustered around the [-] [church] at [-], in a new parish recently established—known as the Catholic parish of [-]. There are 5 Churches in this parish—in the suburbs of [-], [-], [-], [-] and [-]. [-] also provides administrative support for the 2 Churches in the adjoining parishes of [-] and [-]. The relevant Postcode for this Plenary Council submission is [-] Many of the members of the S J Group have been members since its inception—more than 20 years ago. We are currently made up of 2 Males—and about 5 Females. The average age is probably about 70 or so. For 12 years and 9 years respectively, two of this SJ Group served simultaneously as members of the [-] diocesan S J Council. As a result, the SJ diocesan Council and the City Region SJ Group co-operated with a number of jointly organised Seminars, Forums and Actions. The responses below are largely drawn from a simple paper version of the above Question. These paper questions were distributed at weekend Masses in the 5 [-] parish churches in Oct 2018. The responses were anonymous; and probably more than 100 were submitted. Their length and detail varied for one or two words, to half a typed page, to several typed pages. A small group from the Parish Pastoral Council condensed them into their current form. Our City Region Social Justice Group has considered these responses, and decided they were a good representation of our thinking, so we have adopted them—with a few additional points or short sentences. We would love to be included in the next stage of the Plenary Council discernment, and the best contact details for that are my details. I was designated scribe for this submission. [-] I will try and compress our responses into 2 word docs, each of 500 words or less.</p>
<p>I feel with the power of prayer God is asking us all for kindness and love and to look after our marginalised. To Listen and Hear our children. All our Children need to be heard and educated to understand our God ... to be taught how to pray and to come and actually attend Sunday Mass regularly. I am in hope that the Plenary Council will listen and hear our children's voices as well as help for those that need it in our individual communities.</p>
<p>I did participate in 1 parish meeting, but think it is hard to get in-depth comment when responses are reduced to clichés. God is asking of us in Australia to get real about our commitment to Him</p>

and His word, or run the risk of drowning in lukewarm waters. People are either shell-shocked about recent scandals, or still inclined to blame media etc. An in-depth summary from the Pope down of how paedophilia became so rampant in our churches, schools and institutions especially in the Western world, may help people to come to terms with it and look at how we can remake our Church, or they might join the burgeoning swell of cynics and simply leave. I did leave for 3 years a while back but decided to re-join and see what I could do to help. I bolster my Catholic faith by also belonging to an evangelical group of woman who pray and read the word of God together. Their faith is strong and vibrant, without being too boisterous. I would love to see in our Church that kind of strong, outspoken faith based on the Word of God and internalised, so that our everyday life reflects the mystery and love of God as an active participant, and not a member of the 'Sunday Mass, I've done my duty' club. There is a desperate need to get away from such formalised, structured religion as we have in the Catholic Church. It gets in the way of God. He walks among us. He calls us his sisters and brothers, and calls us to give witness that Jesus, the Son of the Living God, has come for all men. I love the Sacraments, but believe that the rituals run the danger of distracting us from God, rather than leading us to him.

Christ appointed his apostles to serve and minister the people. They in turn appointed deacons to look after the temporal assets of the Church to support the needy. The clergy over the centuries have moved from this position of service to where the appointees of Christ, the Pope, Cardinals, bishops and priests, who are supposed to serve the faithful, are now more focused on controlling the faithful and managing temporal assets of the Church with diminishing regard for faith communities' spiritual needs. To quote a parish priest I was working with on parish accounts, 'I can do almost whatever I want, sleep with women etc. and I don't have to worry because the bishop has no grounds to dismiss me; however if I misappropriate parish funds, I can be dismissed straight away under canon law'. This was reiterated by several senior priests when we were discussing the possibility of lay staff signing minor cheques on behalf of the parish in the absence of the priest. They would not allow this to occur in the event the parish clerk misappropriated the funds and they could lose their position as parish priest. I believe the Church hierarchy have created a culture that is more focused on temporal goods than spiritual needs. To me God is now asking the Australian Church to lead the world in a return to simplicity in faith. Bishops to oversee their [episcopal] see to ensure the overall spiritual needs of the faithful can be met. Priests to be placed in charge of the spiritual life within the smaller faith communities. Parish leaders to be appointed to support the spiritual role of the priest and to assist him where boundaries blend between spiritual and temporal needs. All assets of the community to be returned to the custody of the community, temporal assets of the community to be completely removed from the authority of the clergy. The community to provide for the welfare of their priests, community leaders and community by astute financial management. Communities to have ownership, to be engaged in authentic roles within their Church community, to be accountable for the overall life including spiritual growth and financial security. The faithful to have a role in the selection, personal and professional development and spiritual growth of seminarians and their final appointment as priests. The priest to have no power of veto over temporal decisions. Summary God is offering the Church of Australia to be the world leaders in a return to simplicity in faith. The life of Pope Francis is a shining example. Clergy to return to the role as appointed by Christ, to serve the faithful, The lay to manage the temporal assets of the Church not under the direction of

any clergy. The lay to be instrumental in supporting their priest in spreading the word of God. The lay to actively participate in the selection of priests to nurture their faith communities. The lay to receive the same respect as any member of the clergy in relation to God's mission here on earth.
Be community to each other. Love, support, forgive each other, especially if it doesn't come naturally. Understand each other's weaknesses.
Reach out to those both inside and outside our parish community. Have compassion for others. Ask Holy Spirit for healing. Imitate Jesus in how he related to others.
God is asking us to accept one culture of respect not only for ourselves but for each other. We speak of 'closing the gap' in reference to the Indigenous of this land. I think the same concept applies to what God is asking of us as members of the human race in Australia at this time.
I believe that the community should have a much greater role in the affairs of the Church. There are lots of people who are good people who are prepared to help and run things however the parish priests are so used to being always in charge that they will not accept the laity as being worthy. With the decline of men becoming priests and for the Catholic Church to survive it must allow the laity to take more responsibility. What is wrong with Nuns being able to undertake these responsibilities? The Church is made up of 50% women and 50% men; however more women attend Mass but why are they not given any responsibilities. This is the 21st Century not 2000 years ago. For the Catholic Church to be viable it needs to become inclusive.
<p>God is asking us not to commit sin and to explain to our family and friends what sin is, so that they avoid it to the best of their abilities. In particular, the clergy and the laity need to be educated with the moral teachings of the Church so that they understand that sexual intimacy outside of marriage between a man and a woman, is a mortal sin and an offence against God. In particular, sexual abuse of anyone, but particularly children, is a grave sin and should be strongly discouraged, and that this teaching pertains to the clergy and religious as well as the laity. We need to help the clergy to avoid occasions of this particularly grave sin by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. forming them in the teachings of the Church,2. not allowing them to live alone and be tempted by pornography, alcohol and drugs or other sins of sensuality,3. encourage the bishops to be a friend, mentor, spiritual director and confessor to his parish priests,4. support priests if they have struggles in this area of purity or sensuality.
To be strong in our Faith, particularly as the Church confronts issues of sexual abuse. To be strong in our Faith we must be inclusive and all members of the Church, both Religious and Lay people must be given the opportunity and encouraged to have input into the daily life of the Church. I acknowledge that our Faith has a long and steadfast history, but our culture and society have changed over the past 2000 years and I do not believe that Church doctrine has kept pace with these changes. Whilst we may want to retain the liturgies and traditions of our Faith that have been part of our daily life, we must acknowledge that the future of the Church is dependent on younger people and unless we actively engage then in Church life, our Church may wither and fade. This is particularly true of many communities in Australia. We may need to take a lead from

other countries who have much stronger family based Faith communities. I don't know the answers, but I want to be able to participate in activities that support this renewal of family faith.

Authenticity...i.e. authentic Christianity. "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." St Catherine of Sienna. (Letter 368) When I began thinking about this question, I listed many desirable characteristics...e.g.

- * Be earnest and repent (Rev 3:19—to the Church at Laodicea)
- * Intimate relationship with Jesus
- * Engagement with the Australian culture
- * Effective evangelisation
- * A listening heart
- * Serious and comprehensive formation for all
- * Radical commitment and witness
- * Passion
- * Holiness
- * Allegiance to Jesus Christ
- * Unity...community
- * Proclaim the word of God and fear no-one. (cf Apostles P and P)
- * Awareness
- * Discernment
- * Commitment
- * Conversion/metanoia. But it seems that they and most others are included in the cover-all...Christian Authenticity.

I feel God is asking us to acknowledge our sins and show the real repentance and renew the Church.

All Catholic schools, especially high schools, need trained staff that can recognise the early signs of mental health problems in students and provide early intervention. All teachers and staff should be required, at the very least, to attend a training seminar on youth and child mental health with at least 2 or 3 fully trained staff for intervention and counselling.

Research shows that children are becoming disassociated with the Church at around 13 years of age. Their last real encounter with the Church was around 8 or 9 years old when they completed their sacramental program. As we all know 13 is the start of their teen years and their peers have more of an influence than their parents. A possible solution is to include dialogue and formation in the classroom during religion studies once a fortnight (think of ALPHA style questions). As this is not a required topic in the curriculum and we are wanting the students to feel free to speak, this formation/dialogue should not be included in the grades of the students.

To be true to Jesus and the Gospels, while reaching out to the poor, the underprivileged, the hurt and suffering with the care, love and compassion of Jesus. This care and compassion far outweighs liturgy, doctrine and traditional teaching as the emphasis for our leaders. We need "pastors" of the people rather than a hierarchical or aloof priesthood. We have lost far too many of our former members through a lack of empathy and compassion or even the direct result of the actions or words of our priests. Far too many of our priests lack people skills, while the Church's structure

emphasizes and exacerbates the dominance of the ordained priesthood. The Church is the people of God in its totality but it is dominated by the priesthood. Our school children, youth and young adults are not connecting with our Church and we need to bring them in to a Church that is seen to be relevant and meaningful to them. As a retired Catholic school teacher, I bemoan the teaching of R.E. as an academic subject rather than a way of life connecting us with the reality of the Divine Godhead as the source and purpose of our life and the way we should live it. It is our relationship with our God that gives hope and peace and meaning to life and the joys and struggles we encounter along the way.

That Catholics have help to grow in their understanding of what it means to live an authentic Christian life.

Re-establish a sense of community into Church where equality and acceptance of all is evident in all hierarchies.

Tolerance and acceptance of differences in a multicultural and multi-faith community. So that we can realise more the glory of God. This may be brought about by more education for everyone. Not necessarily formal education but accessible information about the faiths of others.

That as a nation, we work seriously to—include our first people as equal citizens in fact not just theory or 'nice speak' -change our policy towards Refugees from 'brutal' to 'humane.'

With the fall off in Church attendance I feel urged to pray for revival and if more people prayed it should make a difference. The Holy Spirit urges us to give our lives to Jesus.

Fully trusting in and depending on Him, God is calling us to be living witnesses of His mercy, love and truth and His plan for each and every one of us to find happiness, joy and peace on earth and for eternity. The challenge we face in responding to this call is the loss of our institutional credibility, which has its basis in past failures, and is now fuelled by irrational and often hateful public discourse. We have to re-establish our right to be heard by rebuilding our capacity to be seen as a force for good—especially among many disheartened, disillusioned and disaffected Catholics (including Sunday Mass-goers). The disconnect that many feel between “me” and “the Church” has to be repaired. Our calling depends on the power of one, and the communion of many “ones”, nestled in the heart of the One. Each one of us has to fully embody Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives and in this way shine forth as the Church, His living Body. We need a constant push out of our comfort zones and conversion into fearless and effective change-makers who will stand for the dignity of every human life and promote and defend the family based on natural marriage. This will need a significant and comprehensive re-evangelisation, catering for people where they are at, but always with a solid and integrated formation in the teachings of the Church, a love of prayer and the sacraments and the human qualities to put them into practice. We need access to the means to become well-rounded people who have a clear sense of the meaning and purpose of our lives. Critically vital is constant nourishment in Word and Sacrament from passionate and holy priests. For the shaping of vibrant human communities we need leaders (priests, religious, parents, teachers, other role-models) who are focussed on developing

- well-rounded people: who have the human qualities (attitudes, values, skills) to make lifelong and life-giving commitments;
- people who can meet people where they are and make them feel understood and cared for;

- people who can think things through without over-simplifying issues or getting caught up in emotion;
- people who courageously speak the truth with love, especially in the face of vitriolic and thoughtless opposition;
- people who will give of themselves, without counting the cost, for the good of others.

Building on this natural foundation, we need to learn be open to the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives, allowing ourselves to be caught up in the life of a God who loves us utterly selflessly, deeply and passionately. This means ongoing personal encounters with God through prayer and the sacraments, and in our relations with our fellow humans. All of this is a lifelong adventure that begins at baptism. Let's ensure that everyone has many opportunities to meet (and re-meet) Jesus Christ and to grow a deep and flourishing relationship with him and his body, the Church. This is essential for us to be living witnesses.

God is asking us to go back to our traditional roots and not continue down the path of modernism and progressive extremism. We need to stop trying to change things within the Church unless it means reverting to how it once was before all of the problems arose after Vatican II. We need to stick with priests being celibate as it is a tradition going way back and not be forced to drive us further towards Protestantism with priests marrying, not only will there be financial burdens but more importantly they don't have the time to have a family and also serve God in the tight schedule and hard work load that they are given. If we are wondering why vocations aren't happening, look to why there are many in the traditionalist Catholic Churches that celebrate Latin Mass and why the Novus Ordo ones are struggling. We must not allow divorcees to receive Communion no matter what progressives in the Church say as it is a direct undermining of our faith. We must not bow to political correctness and accept the LGBT agenda as it is a mocking of our faith. We need to be more political and get the Church to once again have influence on society and become more powerful in the decision making. We need to ensure Catholic schools are teaching the faith just like they used to rather than pushing these matters aside and becoming no better than Public schools. We need to ensure that every diocese in this country has a Latin Mass available as it promotes the traditional core of the faith and every parishioner should have that option to attend such a Mass, at the moment there are 3 diocese that don't have it available, Wollongong being one of them and for one of the biggest cities in the country to not have one is a disgrace. We must go back to traditional hymns rather than turn into a charismatic Hillsong-style Church, there is already those types of Churches available and whilst some may think they are thriving they are not, because people come and go and don't stay on full term, it also undermines our faith in trying to be like them although we aren't. As a young person I reject guitars and all forms of modern worship and much prefer Gregorian chanting and traditional hymns. Church numbers started to decline when the modern reforms of Vatican II came about and it hasn't recovered since. If you are wondering why our numbers are down and vocations are down, that is the one event plus the further modernisation overtime that has made people lose the faith. We must be strong and adhere to all forms of tradition whether it be regarding liturgy, social views, etc. I also believe that the modern architecture of the newer Churches are a disgrace and look no different to modern Pentecostal halls. Also we need to get rid of gay priests as they have been the ones that have brought about the molestation issues. Sacred silence in Mass and modesty should

be enforced also. Bring back headscarfs and no female speakers, or altar servers. We need to start living our faith.

I think God is asking us to rethink the execution of Vatican II. The truth of the Catholic faith is so beautiful, full of mystery and incredible depth. We need better education of our congregation and in our schools. People would understand why it is so important to practice Catholicism if they knew the teachings. Our Catholic schools need an overhaul. Our local Catholic school promotes Martin Luther and uses Foo Fighters songs in liturgies. Catholics don't do entertainment well. We need to offer our children something different from what the world offers them. The richness of our Church has the power to do that, it doesn't work to try and entertain our youth. Mass and liturgies are not supposed to be about entertainment. There are terrific Catholic resources that can be used, rather than Protestant options. Our priests need to teach ALL truth in their homilies, even what may seem unpleasant; the reality of Hell, the dogma of Purgatory, the necessity of Confession, etc. We need to be encouraged by priests that it is possible for each individual to achieve holiness and sainthood and details on how best to do it. It will result in their joy if done correctly. All priests should be taught throughout their seminary studies and made mandatory to wear their priestly collar at all times during priestly ministries. They should also be strongly encouraged to wear it outside their priestly ministries for all people to recognise them as priests, a true representation of Christ in our midst. This may encourage those afraid to come to the Church Herself, to approach a priest in their own environment. We need to bring holiness back into the Church. The Church has become a place of social interaction, rather than a place of mystery and an encounter with God. For example: Ensuring the Church is a place of silence, keeping social interaction for after Mass, outside the Church. Only using Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for 'Extra-ordinary' circumstances. We seem to have more ministers up on the altar than people attending Mass itself. Keeping jokes, inappropriate music, clapping, etc. outside of the Mass, as it takes away from the focus of the holy sacrifice of Christ taking place. Priests should encourage and educate people as to why we should dress appropriately when attending Mass. I have seen signs about dress code at the front of some Churches. This works well. For priests to encourage parishioners to receive the Holy Eucharist on their tongue rather than on their hand. This example alone would speak volumes to new members of the Church as to the holiness of what they will be receiving. Keeping ALL tabernacles in the middle of the Church, as Christ should always be the focus and centre. Leaving Churches open during the day so that all people can access the Church when needed. All Churches should have a weekly or daily adoration and rosary. And very importantly, encouraging prayer and fasting will save our Church and many souls.

I believe God is asking that we be more inclusive. I am one of the very few young people who are practicing Catholicism. Not one of my friends from my Catholic education are practicing, and I believe a huge reason of that is the way the Catholic Church is set in certain traditions that don't benefit our growth as a whole. In an inclusive modern society the Church must work toward letting any devote person who shares the core values and beliefs of the Church be welcomed. This includes those who want to become leaders, and share these values and practices with the community, starting at priests. Women in the 21st century should be allowed to be priests. Denying some of the most devout Catholics the right to preach and live their truth, especially in

modern times is setting a negative example for the Church's alignment with gender equality. I believe we would have many more incredible, passionate priests if this were the case. I also strongly believe that priests should be given the right to marry. Having a family and sharing such a sacred sacrament with someone you love is a right for every person. With the place recent sexual assault cases have put the Catholic Church in, a change such as this would prove to the rest of Australia that the Church is responding to something negative in a positive way. I value my family more than anything else I have been given, why should priests have to give that up for God when he deems it sacred? Finally, I hope that God is asking us to be accepting. I know that many members of the Church are still divided in the activism of the 21st century, especially the passing of the Gay marriage bill. I think the Church should be setting an example of their respect for those who may not fit the traditional ideals of marriage. We don't all have to agree on the debate and that's okay. However, God asks us to forgive, to be understanding and to love our neighbours. With more education on the LGBTI community (especially in schools) there will be so much more respect and understanding coming from our Church that I think the rest of Australia needs to hear at this time. After all, doesn't Jesus guide as to use our faith as a way of connecting with those who aren't the same as us? And to love them despite these differences? The only way necessary changes such as these can be made are by creating an example and putting these ideas to the Vatican (specifically the first two points I have made). The Australian Catholic Church needs to create an example as God's people and show inclusivity and acceptance through new ways of practicing that keep core values and traditions, while moving forward into a place of equality and progression.

He is probably pleading with us to stop, and go back to our foundations. To stop making it about power, about someone said someone did this, making it about Oh, but here the Bible says so and so and to retreat back to our core beliefs before they got twisted. Before, when the religion was about kindness, and loving one another. When priests were people you could trust and the person who baptised you wasn't a rapist or someone who covered up sexual abuse. Before people got on their high horse and proclaimed that people who are in love don't conform the "traditions"—not just a man and a woman. We should teach love, and peace. We should look after the world that God gave us and not murder and pillage into a coma. And most of all we should love one another—completely regardless of the gender, race, religion, colour, ethnicity or mental, physical or emotion states and beings or anything like that. I believe God is asking us, above everything and most importantly, especially now—to be kind. To be loving. To care. And to spread that kindness and that love as far and as wide your arms can reach and infect us all with it. God is asking us to be better. To do better.

To become welcoming communities. To show hospitality to refugees, and to each other in our families and parish communities.

In terms of praying for good shepherds for the flock, and bishops trying to provide the same, our first prayer is for vocations to the priesthood. This is more likely if Catholic formation and practice does not seek to diminish the sacred ministry of priests. Catholic schools perhaps have "Catholic education", but not "Catholic formation". They may try to impart some knowledge about Catholicism. Admittedly, this is done in strange language where it seems externalised from the school and student (e.g. "It is Catholic belief that ... "rather than simply stated as point blank fact,

and willingness to explain why we believe it to be fact, and not just "Catholic belief"). However there is very little or no actual formation at all in practical implementation of core tenets of Catholic belief. It seems very frustrating that Catholic schools seem totally inept at imparting that the Third Commandment is still one of the 10 commandments, and that paragraph 2180 CCC confirms and quotes Canon 1247: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." Catholic schools are sadly asleep at the wheel! It is not hard to see why there are not many vocations! Nevertheless, if there truly were still a shortage of good shepherds, who could not be sourced otherwise, particularly to have Masses continued in geographically dispersed (even if only in appropriate travelling times for insufficient priests to cover numerous Mass Centres each Sunday) but where it is desired to not close long established Catholic parishes, then the bishops with Papal approval might potentially consider whether the Holy Spirit wished perhaps even for a short period to call married men who are considered 'viri probati' (to quote Pope Francis) who might perhaps be willing to accept a calling to priestly ministry ... IF that were somehow to potentially provide better shepherds, as the goal has to be for quality, not solely on quantity of shepherds. It is not impossible that some married men may be well formed, and have studied some Catholic philosophy and Catholic Theology at some point and be willing to accept a calling, should that be God's Will. Balancing any such ministry with family and the financial support thereof (generally from their previous form or work) may be a tricky challenge, as such things would make it a challenge to even find sufficient time for time—consuming regular studies. However, they may be able to manage daily Mass, Breviary and prayer. Once their children have become independent, they might be able to resume more comprehensive studies and availability for more time consuming ministry. On Sundays they may be more of a resource akin to a relieving priest, but they too (prior to their children growing up) probably won't be that able to travel more than one hour one way to a distant Mass Centre. Not a solution, but just a flexibility option IF it was truly felt that the Holy Spirit were open to such an option for the short ...

(further final thoughts on earlier submission): If God were asking us to permit, for a time married men who are, 'viri probati' (to use Pope Francis's expression) to enter priestly ministry, then the criteria would [need] careful examination. If prior to entering the vocation of marriage a potential candidate was on a trajectory not inconsistent with a priestly vocation, and perhaps even felt a possible call in that direction, and during such time preceding a call to marriage, was living a devout life (e.g. daily Mass, regular devotional practices, some studies in Catholic philosophy and theology, with sound formation etc.), and was from or had returned to an district where there is a genuine shortage of priests, and furthermore continued to live a deep faith in frequenting daily Mass when fitting in with work commitments (more difficult in regional or remote areas as weekday Masses are scarce to start with), daily devotions (e.g. rosary), and daily reading of the readings of the Mass of the day etc. then perhaps some criteria may be there? Obviously such formation had not completed that of a full seminary curriculum etc., but in part may well have, and in life and searching may perhaps have gained valuable lessons, insights and formation which in a seminary may have potentially not been explored as much. Such 'proven men' ('viri probati') may have been searching for the meaning and hope which they had seen that their friends, family and relatives had lost or neglected, and feel perhaps a particular longing to spread such message

and to sow the seed again for those who had lost the treasure that was theirs when they were all children together. We pray the Holy Spirit guide us. Amen.

To move away from the rigidity of the past and to develop a means to reconcile with one another.

Thoughts submitted to the Plenary Council 2020 website by an Eremos group in the [-] area:

- Surrender power and be more humble, walking in the path of Jesus.
- Ban clericalism and open the Church to women priests and allow the choice of marriage or celibacy for priests.
- Listen, Listen, Listen.
- Rewrite liturgy to make it relevant.
- Retraining of the older priests (in the smaller parishes) in a new language in the liturgy; and retraining and reteaching of the younger and newer priests in a 21st century up-to-date relevant way to link the scripture readings with the homily.
- Examination of “Love thy neighbour as thyself” with an awareness and acceptance that there is possibly more “non-self-love” in today’s world than there is “self-love”.
- Work together with those seeking change and attempting to inject new blood and life into the Catholic Church.
- Change from a clerical culture to a genuine inclusive culture, particularly involving women and youth.
- Integrate the findings of modern science, both physical and social sciences, into the theology and spirituality of the Church.
- By listening to both experts and to the general public come up with an approach to human sexuality that will speak in helpful ways to modern people enabling them to integrate their sexuality and their spirituality, and to value the human body and relationships of friendship and intimacy.
- Search for commonality in other faiths and respect differences.
- Engage with current social, psychological, sexuality thinking.
- Resource outside bodies to review organisational standards of governance.
- Let go of the Spiritual superiority and instead adopt the stance of just giving guidance and love and support.
- Don’t set up priests or others as the go-between between God and us.
- There can be a lot learnt from taking on many of the ‘New thought’ and ‘New Spirituality’ concepts. These have been adopted widely in society, unfortunately often bypassing the Church
- A complete rewrite of the Church service which is archaic and out of touch and unreal in many aspects.
- Aim for what is fundamental that is worth holding on to.
- Letting go of, or easing up on, practices that continue just because of tradition. Letting in expressions of new ideas as related to the day and age in which we exist. Find ways and expressions of challenging the old ways.
- Establish groups where people can come and experience new life, and where people show respect for one another.

I think God is asking us to live our life as good examples of our Catholic faith, caring for our neighbour and the disadvantaged and our environment. To be the living witness of God's immense love to everyone.

I believe God is asking that the Church embrace cosmic theology not only in word but actual reality. This would mean that our theology move from the Middle Ages and into the present. It is more than caring for the land and attention to all our waste, good things in themselves but they are not Cosmic theology. We need over time, to de-mythologise and re-mythologise many of our beliefs. But we seriously need to begin and not just talk about it. Our place in the universe has been redesigned in terms of time and place. Science has now given us a reasonable accurate account of our origins. It is becoming more obvious every day that our generation finds something lacking in an Evangelism of past centuries. So, what is the perennial question, where is the human headed? It is no longer healthy to stay with the creation story laid out in Genesis, with a creator God making an Earth and planting humans in it. The Christic drive that called Jesus still calls us today. It is not based on dogmas or creeds but with human beings being transformed by the teachings of Jesus, these are universal and meant for all peoples. Of course we need from the head to the heart and help people to find and nurture their soul. The soul is not some mysterious something that we can 'stain by stain by sin' but that deep inner knowing of our true selves. The time is now! We need urgently to develop a life going liturgy for the Eucharist. We need people who are poets and artists to choose the words and format. It needs to speak to the heart, not the head with proper words that please God. God has no ego, she looks at the heart as the psalmist tells us and knows all our comings and goings. On a cultural and civil level I would to see our leaders stand up for humanity and promote a human way of life where all humans are made in God's image. Why should minority groups be allowed to control the future of humanity? I would like to quote Boris Pasternak. "Into this tasteless heap of gold and marble, He came light and clothed in aura, emphatically human, deliberately provincial, Galilean and at that moment Gods of nations ceased to be and man came into being, man the carpenter, the plowman, the shepherd, one who does not sound in the least proud, this man thankfully celebrated in all the cradle songs of mothers and picture galleries of the world. This is the Jesus that I would like to be spoken about at Eucharist. Teach us how to become mystics and discover that centre within that we call soul.

The theme chosen by the group was 'The Unheard Voices' which covered issues around the environment, the lack of hearing at the parish level compared to the richness of our tradition, not being heard and wondering what the point is in remaining involved, our inability to engage with young people and their disinterest, The sharing covered the beauty of the tradition of the Church and our need to embrace this beauty. The challenge is to create a space for the intersection of the tradition and the aspects of life where people are not being heard—environment, first Australians, refugees, domestic violence, youth, parents. These groups of people were termed as the 'outsiders'. We need to be more inclusive and hospitable so that they feel at home when they connect with us. The dilemma faced by the group was how do we empower people to go out and bring the 'outsiders' to Jesus who is our Lord and saviour. There was a real desire for us to be bold and courageous in our faith and for people not to underestimate the power of invitation. If people have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ they would wish to know and share Christ more in word and deed. God is asking us to be and grow disciples. This is countercultural to who we are

and what we have become. How can we hear the voices of our excellent theologians who break open the richness of our tradition? Give us the courage to listen and then to respond.

Following Jesus—to see thee more clearly, follow thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day. This conversation was an invitation to be part of the Jesus movement and to ignite the spark of hope in wanting to engage with others and invite them to come along. God is asking us to follow Jesus because Jesus is the way to the Father. If we were to focus on Jesus then we could 'heal the world, make it a better place, for you and for me and the entire human race'. It would also mean that we would have a more genuine relationship with others through Jesus. We need to have a responsive parish community with people who are powerhouses of action, responding to local needs. Such a united community would provide support and encouragement because of their lived faith life and experience. If Jesus is at the centre then we can keep going with courage and action. It is time to revisit our humanness and to reach out to others and to be prepared for a complete surprise or surprises. It is time to begin the journey towards change, to imagine a new way of being Church. It is time to pray to be revolutionary to become more mature disciples, to be called into a deeper, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The 'institution' and its rules and trappings can get in the way of personal and communal holiness. Firstly, there must be a personal conversion, a desire to be followers of Jesus and then maybe religion makes sense, to fill the world with justice, compassion, mercy, hope, love, faith, humility, forgiveness.....

I have facilitated a number of listening and dialogue sessions and have been aware of the deep pain present in participants in these groups. In each of the groups people have cried and shared stories of deep pain and of longing. I now wonder if some of this distress and pain lies within our cellular memories. It could go right back to the heritage of those who travelled to Australia from England and Ireland. It could lie within those who come from the First Australians who have and continue to be disadvantaged. It could come from those who came to Australia after the Second World War. Australia is a place of dispossession and loss. This presents us with stories of stoicism but also of unresolved grief and loss. The absolute faith of those Catholics before Vatican II and the impact this had on their lives has been passed onto succeeding generations. The days of black and white religion has left its mark and now people are reeling from the reality that leaders took advantage of young people and abused them. How could such atrocities occur when the image of the Church and its leaders were so pious? This history has created a great deal of cynicism, harm, hurt, shame and scandal. The Plenary Council is at least giving people a voice to be heard and to be reassured that their story matters. So much hurt and harm has been done and now it is time for healing, the healing touch of Jesus. As a Church, we must engage with people when they connect with us. Each parish community has the capacity to bring about the 'reign of God' in the local place. They need to recognise their significance in connecting with people at the local level. This is our gift to the world—small local communities of people who care and who wish to make the world a better place.

God is asking us to be like Jesus. No colour, race or religious discrimination. All our "faiths" have but one objective. To be one with our "God" by whomever we call Him. Religion is cultural and should not define our lives. We are asked (from the earliest times) to treat others as we would be treated. To love God above all and love our neighbour. All "religions" say basically the same thing. As Christians we should all be as one regardless as to who is the "head". Let us not forget that God

is THE Head and earthly rulers come and go—popes and kings alike. Some good some not so. I do not believe in the infallibility of any man. Only God is infallible. This suggestion was made by a very "fallible" pope! Today's clergy really need to come into the 21st century and although it may upset the old timers (the only ones who attend Mass these days) you need a Revolution to get back to what is important. Yes, priests should marry if they wish. (like they were many centuries ago). Women should be able to be priests (as they were in ancient times). Why not? Women aren't a threat! They contribute a balanced view. As in any position, they need to be the best "applicant". Homilies need to be RELEVANT. Relate them to everyday life just as Jesus did through his parables. The Gospel should be spoken about in context comparing then and now—not some airy fairy spiritual speak that leaves most people yawning. Congregations are not full of stupid people neither are we all au fait with Canon Law. We just want relevance to our lives. MUSIC is essential but the Hymns that were relevant 50 years ago are not necessarily so today. It's no wonder there isn't anyone under the age of 40. Music is "LIFE" to kids. Just look around at the ear-podded society between 12 and 40!!!

I believe God is asking us to renew our faith commitment to the man/God of Jesus shown within the Gospels. Too many man-made rules, regulations, formalities and some hubris, coming from within the hierarchy have disturbed and blurred the balance of the gospel's message. The gospel is supposed to liberate but with the extra burdens of man-made (Vatican) regulations, they tend to add layers. These layers of regulation pile up within the human spirit, stifling growth towards a response to the Gospel' message.

I think God is asking us in Australia to lobby the Catholic Church to allow clergy to marry and women to become priests. If the Catholic Church doesn't pursue these changes we won't have any clergy to continue. It's time for the 'Church' to acknowledge that it's time to embrace the many faithful men and women willing to dedicate their lives to the continuation of this great establishment. I implore the Catholic Church to listen to your people.

God is asking us to create a more compassionate, just and honest society—a society where vulnerable people are cared for; where individual welfare is more important than profit or power or protection of the organisation; where there is equal opportunity for education and employment (our young people especially need help here so they can make a contribution to this society).

Lumen Gentium' Study Ed. B. Huebsch. Chapter 2; 14. This passage was a real wake up call to me. To be fully part of the Church is to acknowledge and embrace the Creed, Sacraments, Community and Authority. But in addition to that we have 'to live in love'! 'Failure to put love into practice, even if we are faithful to the Church in all other ways, is a rejection of salvation itself.' That is a statement that made me really sit up and take notice, as a failure to really love is so serious that it brings severe judgement. This is what Jesus stressed, love everyone, even enemies. With love must come forgiveness to help heal past injustices and hurts. It is reaching outside the Church to Christians of other faith traditions. Those of monotheist faiths Jewish and Islam. To the searches, those of unsure faith or those who say they have none. To be involved or at least attend Ecumenical Gatherings, listening! To deepen our understanding of other faiths. In short reaching out to anyone in material, emotional or spiritual need, regardless of their beliefs, race, gender. In 1 Cor. 12:4–31 the Spirit distributes different gifts to different people. The individual's God given

gifts are to be used for the glory of God and the benefit of the whole people of God in the parish, and the wider community. We need each other to work in partnership, the Ordained priest is our pastoral leader, called to serve, he is not superior to those he serves, he is a partner and needs to be understood as such by the parishioners. Parishioners need to realise that they should not remain passive. The priest needs to know his parishioners and understand their needs and concerns. God only has imperfect people to bring about his kingdom, everyone's contribution counts and is important. Just because we are sinners does not excuse us from reaching out. Women need to be seriously involved, in responsible rolls, the young need to experience good example, but also need to be allowed to have a voice. This is the way Jesus treated women and the young when he walked the earth, as did the disciples in the early days of the Church. All need the opportunity to have formation courses concerning their ministry. Bishops preside over the people of God, as did the apostles. The bishop's gifts are wisdom, understanding and sincerity of heart. He is to be a shepherd for God's people. All bishops are bound together as a college, with the Pope who is the bishop of Rome and they are called to manifest unity among themselves and maintain this unity of faith among their Catholic flock.

To be courageous; to put aside self-interest; to marry our words to our actions; to accept that women, without whom the Church would fall to its knees, deserve more than token gestures of inclusion. To lead the way in whatever the Church of the future will look like. To strike out alone, if that is what is required. After all, is that not what Jesus did?

Integration of all aspects of Christian life is essential to the Church's long term relevancy and survival:

- 1) Integration across parish, school and family communities with emphasis on faith, multicultural, gender and marriage inclusion. Ecumenism and respect across all faiths: Christian, Judaism and Islam are important to the future of civilised society.
- 2) Catholic priestly life must be inclusive of celibate and non-celibate and male and female.
- 3) Priests must be able to communicate effectively with their congregations. They must have empathy for the Australian way of life. This is especially important for the youth. Competing for their hearts and minds takes significant skill. Church staffing by use of ordained clergy that lack English language skills is a huge problem not a solution for all parishioners. Common responses from youth when attending Mass are, 'it is boring; I couldn't understand the priest; I don't want to go!' Liturgy, sermon and music must be attuned to the youth, not just the elderly.
- 4) Elderly are depressed that the Church community is aging. They worry that there will not be a faith community after them. They worry about the future for the children and grandchildren. Relevancy of the Christian life is seen to be waning hugely since *Humanae Vitae* (1968). *Humanae Vitae* needs revision to incorporate theology of the Informed Conscience. The idea of morality contained in *Humanae Vitae* should have been changed decades ago, especially after *Roe vs Wade* in the USA (1973). Pushing away practicing Catholics by the dogmatic nature of morality contained in the encyclical was a huge mistake by Pope Paul VI.
- 5) Finally the voting at the Plenary Council 2020 is seen as once again the clergy dominating the outcome. There is likely to be little renewal if voting is dominated by the bishops of the Church. The Pope, bishops and the priests need to take a risk and trust the laity. This must be demonstrated by the voting rights established at the Plenary Council. Pope Francis should have

insisted on at least equal representation at the Council with a high majority (60%+) for any major resolution
To be non-judgmental, tolerant and more accepting of God's people. Open to different views... reaching out to others... accepting of differences in other e.g. unmarried, disadvantaged, alternative life styles, the intellectually challenged, other racial groups or backgrounds... better discern and respond appropriately to the needs of others.
Discernment—listening without judgement.
To love one another, Inclusive, Acceptance, Spread the good news of our faith, Open our heart to those less fortunate, Forgiveness.
The future of the Church is in the hands of the younger generation—thus liturgies/sacraments/Mass/doctrine/social teaching needs to be culturally relevant (speak the lingo, be human).
"The Church must be a place of mercy, freely given, "Where EVERYONE (our emphasis) can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel". (Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel 2013). We believe that this is what God is asking of us in Australia at this time.
To truly listen to the substance of God's Word manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. To heed His message of God's love and mercy for all of humanity and to attempt to put this into practice in our lives.
This group strongly believes that God is asking us to boldly proclaim our faith in God's infinite love for all of us (contrast the fearful, punishing, segregating God of our youth) and to live out this conviction by welcoming and loving every person sincerely and fully, despite differences of all kinds (race, religion, etc.), especially in practical, neighbourly ways. God is asking us to emphasize our common humanity and therefore be accepting and respectful in the most basic ways, including good manners and courteous speech. God wants us to refrain from being judgmental and to find ways we can make entry into Church community, or return to the Church, an easier path by eliminating unnecessary obstacles. Use of the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation was advocated. God wants clericalism eliminated, especially through openness and humility from all in the Church. God wants us to know Jesus more maturely and fully through access to good Scripture study and the core of our Catholic teaching tradition, to bring about a more intimate adult relationship. God wants us to recognize the Spirit at work in the "secular", to see the good wherever it is and to celebrate it. We accepted the compelling centrality of love in this paradigm: God is LOVE, God LOVES us, LOVE one another.
To make greater efforts to care for our environment and to seriously face the challenges of climate change. To share fairly the world's resources. To promote equality. To limit over consumption. To preserve the world's natural resources for future generations. To bravely set an optimistic course for the world's future. To make some sacrifices so others in poorer countries can live. To take risks, be active in social discourse and to speak up for what is right. If the rich could live more simply, then the poor could simply live. Care for the environment to lessen the impact of it being destroyed, reaching out to others. Try to be non-judgmental, tolerant and more accepting of God's people. Be open to views different to one another. Reaching out to others

where they are at / not expecting them to come to us. Specifying the different groups / loving all people and accepting differences e.g. unmarried, alternate life styles, others of different social groups or backgrounds, the disadvantaged and intellectually challenged, To better discern and respond appropriately to the needs of others. We decided that our theme for the listening and dialogue session is SOCIAL JUSTICE ... being inclusive, avoiding racial hatred, accepting each other.

Keep the faith, attend Church regularly and love our neighbours.

God is asking of us in Australia at this time to bring young people to know and love Jesus, and to grow in a lifelong relationship with him." Comments: This is a tall order because there is already to a large extent a missing Christian generation, being young people's parents. For these families, this means that coming to know and love Jesus will not occur in family life. We need to somehow engage better with young people to find out from them what they like and need, what they find their spiritual needs are and how to adapt to them. We need to be more open to them, learn from them and from those Christian Churches that have more success than we do—such as some Pentecostal ones, and adapt our approaches. World Youth Day has proved to be successful. We need more knowledge of what can work and of how to implement initiatives. Pedagogically, there is a need to find ways of delivering spiritual development, of what it is to know and love Jesus, and of how this transforms and benefits one's life.

Jesus gave Peter the power to bind and unbind. Over the centuries, the Church has kept binding. The simple commandments of God have been turned into a litany of have to beliefs and don'ts—just look at canon law and the Catholic Catechism. God is asking the Church in Australia to let his people free, free to have a personal relationship with their God. The need for unbinding is in numerous areas as the Church reads the signs of the times and meets its members in the twenty first century—that is where they are at. I see the need for change in the Church's attitude to forgiveness of 'grievous' sin. For many years now the Catholics of Australia have shown by their absence from reconciliation that they do want to confess to a man. After all, when Jesus forgave, there were not five conditions for forgiveness, and sinners were not put the embarrassment of telling details and numbers of times—they were forgiven. Even when the Vatican Council introduced the third rite it has been made "illegal" for only but a few to make use of. What right has anyone, even a pope, to put a condition (or five) or a limit on God's forgiveness. I don't go to reconciliation anymore (although I did attend general reconciliation when offered by a local priest—the Church was the packed out and there a beautiful ceremony of sorrow). I am a grievous sinner but I still attend Mass and Holy Communion. I speak to God about my sins and ask him to tear open my heart and see my sins, which he can do better than me— God have mercy on me a sinner. When I go to Mass I take seriously the number of times I ask for forgiveness and trust that God does that. I don't know the attitude towards the Sacrament of Reconciliation in other countries but in Australia people have "spoken". We need to be at peace that God can forgive our sins as Jesus did. Maybe, with the removal of the impediment of Reconciliation to wayward Catholics returning to worshipping God, our pews may be fuller. The Church in Australia wonders at the lack of youth and young people—maybe they are bound by too many rules and regulations, and need more freedom in the way they communicate with God. Church in Australia, please read the signs of the times instead of following archaic traditions. Need more freedom in their...

God is asking of us in Australia at this time to bring young people to know and love Jesus, and to grow in a lifelong relationship with him.” Comments: This is a tall order because there is already to a large extent a missing Christian generation, being young people’s parents. For these families, this means that coming to know and love Jesus will not occur in family life. We need to somehow engage better with young people to find out from them what they like and need, what they find their spiritual needs are and how to adapt to them. We need to be more open to them, learn from them and from those Christian Churches that have more success than we do—such as some Pentecostal ones, and adapt our approaches. World Youth Day has proved to be successful. We need more knowledge of what can work and of how to implement initiatives. Pedagogically, there is a need to find ways of delivering spiritual development, of what it is to know and love Jesus, and of how this transforms and benefits one’s life. THANK YOU FOR ASKING FOR OUR INPUT. ABOUT TIME! HOPEFULLY IT WILL BE LISTENED TO AND ACTED UPON WITH COURAGEOUS AND PROFOUND ENDEAVOURS.

Responses from City Region S J Group—Word Doc 2

Liturgy

- o The Mass to be the central focus of our Religion.
- o A new missal with prayers that are not dualistic.
- o To have fun at Mass, be joyful so people want to come.
- o Teach the young people to love and respect the Mass.
- o To encourage the young to want to come to Mass.
- o Using Rite 3 for confession.
- o Dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics to make Australian Liturgy more Australian.
- o Ensure that all Churches have access to modern technology.
- o Indoor gathering space for the community.
- o Need to be prayerful, compassionate and understanding.
- o Show sincere gratitude to all our volunteers.
- o More women involved at all levels—more women preachers.

Outreach and Social Justice

- o To support traditional families in our society.
- o To provide care for families in need.
- o Provide funds and other material support for the poor.
- o Welcome and care of refugees.

- o Support for one another—Vinnies.
- o Caring for the environment “Laudato Si”
- o Being actively involved in the care of the poor and marginalised—oppose unjust laws.
- o To take a strong public stance on social justice issues.
- o Provide spiritual and monetary assistance to the victims of crimes perpetrated on the young.
- o St. [-]’s parish to provide a hospitality centre with meals, laundry facilities and showers. Places of friendship.
- o Positive affirmation of LGBTI people.
- o Lay people to take on pastoral roles—visiting the sick and grieving.
- o Living the Christian life—to be proud to be Catholic—witness.
- o Social justice issues and fair working and employment conditions need to be applied to all workers and volunteers in the parish and diocese.
- o Church leaders to take a stronger public stance on social justice and humanitarian issues e.g. refugees.
- o To support and assist the homeless.
- o We need to be conscious of the unChurched and the youth—to become relevant.
- o Some of the S J activities and actions by our City Region group have included topics and resolutions such as:
 - o apart from the question whether importing clergy “works” (i.e. for us), is it not a denial of social justice to the countries and communities from whence the clergy come?
 - o modern slavery in its various forms;
 - o the need for a living wage;
 - o inclusive and sustainable economy (2015 SJ Statement);
 - o Palestine;
 - o Violence.
 - o Seminars and Forums on Climate Change and Global Warming (2018); and on Transitioning to Renewable Energy (2015).

Devotion

- o Prayer—for our government, rain.
- o Promote devotions to the Divine Mercy and other Marian devotions.
- o The Rosary

Our group unanimously put forward that we have a problem getting young people to attend Mass and we believe that God would like us come back to Him for worship for Bible study and simply as a community in support of our fellow man.



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. Is the Church willing to cease its discrimination against women and to offer them positions of equal responsibility to those offered to men?
2. Is the Church willing to recognize the relationship/sexual needs of religious rather than advocating for an unrealistic suppression of these needs, thus exacerbating the abuse of innocent children, which has completely undermined the credibility of the Catholic Church in Australia?
3. The primary question is how is the Church in Australia is going to survive?
4. Why do we need to bring priests from overseas?
5. How can we better recognise and implement the practice of Lay Pastoral Ministry?
6. When will the Church in Australia embrace our Indigenous people and culture by promoting them consistently and authentically?
7. When will the Church allow a choice of celibacy or marriage for those who have answered the call to priesthood, in respect for the different gifts that God has given them?
8. In our male dominated Church, where there is not enough balance of power, why are women not given the opportunity to use their God given gifts to share responsibility for the mission of God in the world?
9. How we recover from the sexual abuse scandal?
10. Can we as a Church focus less on concerns of the world such as environmental issues and immigration and more on saving our immortal souls?
11. Why do bishops bring out priests from other countries and cultures to try to maintain the clerical structures of the Church?
12. Can the reception of communion be opened up to other baptised Christians?
13. Why can't divorced people who have remarried receive communion especially when they're the innocent party?
14. Can the Church update her views and teachings on homosexuality?
15. Youth are the Church of tomorrow. How can we make it more relevant and inviting to them?
16. How will younger people be attracted to the Church?
17. What does our future Church look like?
18. Who will be taking on various roles in our Church once we move on?
19. How do we encourage youth participation?
20. Should we have more lay presiders?
21. Should we allow female priests?

22. Should we change the rules regarding contraception?
23. Should we allow priests to marry?
24. Should the Church have a less top down model?
25. Canon Law needs to change to be more realistic and authentic within the 21st century?
26. How can women have a greater role to play in the future of the Church?
27. Why can't priests marry and have a family?
28. Why does the Church have so many rules that were not asked for by Jesus?
29. How can we be just and inclusive and sincerely respectful in a top down, hierarchical and male dominated Church structure?
30. How can we find models of Church that work with the realities of our world?
31. How can we create a Church that engages with new ideas and differing opinions so that we broaden the range of people who can honestly say they feel they belong?
32. Why does the Church hang onto an ancient form of dress, which mimics the civil trappings of leadership rather than adopting the simple shepherd style?
33. Could they [the bishops] look into bringing priests from overseas to become either assistant priests in our parishes or possibly to be trained to become parish priests?
34. How will the Church become holier?
35. How can we better fully implement the instructions of The Second Vatican Council, according to their original intentions—reading directly from the text, not corrupted by modernist interpretations?
36. What more will the Church openly do to support sex abuse victims and make reparations for the harm inflicted by filthy paedophiles and homosexuals?
37. How do we as Church influence the overall status of refugees in Australia?
38. Is it the Churches job to judge and exclude, or to welcome and let God do the judging?
39. Can ANTIOCH be redeveloped?
40. When and how might leadership become a more shared model?
41. When will the Catholic Church become inclusive to all?
42. When will the Catholic Church allow priests and nuns to marry?
43. Can the Plenary Council consider opportunities for faithful people who have left Religious life to lead parishes instead of bringing in priests from different cultures or to support priests from different cultures?
44. Should priests wear clerical attire when they are out in public?
45. Should priests remind us of the special points of our faith during homilies e.g. marriage vows, abortion, divorce?
46. Why is there a problem with getting married during Lent?
47. How will the Church listen to and respond to young people?
48. How can the council begin to implement deeper and more meaningful adult Christian education about the meaning of a Christian life?
49. What exactly is the Agenda of the bishops/cardinals? Have they already decided the outcome?
50. How can we be the beating heart of Jesus in the world today?
51. Is the Church delivering meaningful liturgies and activities for young people in a fast changing world?
52. When will Australian Church leadership be determined by suitability rather than gender or tradition?
53. How is the Church going to produce Catholics?
54. When will faithful Catholics be taken seriously?

55. What is needed to help people live through the ongoing pain, shame, suffering caused by sexual abuse?
56. Where will the Church be in ten years' time when many if not most of the current Church attenders are no longer here?
57. How will the Church deconstruct clericalism and change behaviors that reinforce it?
58. Would the Church consider not constructing any new Catholic Churches?
59. How will small or poor parish communities survive if they can't maintain their ministries?
60. Who is currently talking to the Youth of Australia about faith in Jesus Christ?
61. How can the barrier between priests and people be removed?
62. How can we revitalise our Churches so that they become a living witness to the power and love of God for his people, and for the world?
63. When one branch of Christianity cannot do it all, why aren't we joining forces, or inviting other denominations to teach us?
64. What concrete measures is the Church going to implement to avoid the possibility of future sexual abuse of children by the clergy?
65. Where will our Church be in 30 years' time?
66. Why don't parishes and dioceses work together to support parishioners by providing faith education opportunities?
67. How often do the bishops check if RCIA, baptismal preparation, marriage preparation and adult faith courses exist in parishes?
68. How do we create a community in Church that is more welcoming of everyone?
69. How do we create equality within the Church community?
70. How does evangelisation occur if we don't meet families where they are?
71. Why can't we have Mass every day and many opportunities for reconciliation?
72. In large cities, why can't neighbouring parishes schedule Masses at different times so people with work and other commitments can find a daily Mass to attend?
73. How can we have a unified voice on the teachings of the Church?
74. Can music and dance be an essential part of the Mass as a celebration? (not a distraction)
75. Will divorce be recognised?
76. Will the Catholic Church ever recognise that birth control has been going on for decades and no one feels guilty?



RESPONSES TO QUESTION 3

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

STORIES OF FAITH OR CHURCH SHARED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3

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

In keeping with the guidelines of consent explained earlier in the report, these stories are only from those individuals or groups from your diocese who consented to having their submission being made public and being shared with their diocese. About 40 per cent of all responses did not have consent for one or both of these criteria and therefore, their stories have not been included here.

Music and hymns shaped me. The modern music is bad. Homilies that explained the gospel and readings in an erudite manner. The value and beauty in some Latin hymns like at the Stations of the Cross. The reverence in the silence before and after Mass.

Yes, I certainly would. My adult faith formation over the past 33 years has been the greatest gift of God, given through fortnightly groups offered by the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St Joseph. These Sisters have received very little recognition for their tireless dedication and commitment. To refer to them as “laity” is something that has never made sense to me, since I see their life-long commitment as entirely unique. Faith education by priests has been minimal by comparison in my experience. For this reason alone, the ongoing marginalization of women in the Church has become abhorrent and totally unacceptable to me. Further, the Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of children in Australia has resulted in a stonewalling response from clergy, leaving those who advocated for the rights of the abused feeling utterly betrayed, misled, exhausted and disgusted. The Mercy of God needs to be experienced by these people, but they have been met only by intransigence. For the first time in my life, I feel distinctly disinclined to continue attending Mass in the Catholic Church. This saddens me enormously, but if the heartfelt needs of the people can so readily be ignored, what am I adhering to?

While our Church’s present circumstances on the one hand make us despondent and humiliated, they also present an opportunity to re-find our understanding of the Church’s mission and its Catholic identity. How is the Church going to embrace the role of refounders within the Church in a positive and healthy manner rather than adopting and ostracising attitude?

- Example of authentic leadership: Bishop Chris Saunders in NT—active in his diocese; knows people by name; visits people in gaol; knows family backgrounds; In this considerable geographical area, he gives autonomy to lay people employed in ministry.
- Culture of Church – hierarchy and power needs to change
- Contradictory leadership – happy/unhappy, accepting/intolerant, patient/frustrated, kindness/cruelty
- Disillusionment with Hierarchy—I was a parishioner of [-] parish in the Archdiocese of Sydney. I was a very active participant in the Liturgy leading the singing with a dedicated organist at the 10am Sunday morning Mass. In May 1986 [-] suddenly, without any prior notification by the

hierarchy, was declared the Cathedral of a newly established diocese of Broken Bay. The parish community read about this in the local newspaper of the area!!! When this became known and the parish was now to operate as a Cathedral, one Sunday morning, the organist and myself were informed that our services would not be required at the Mass as a new music director for the Cathedral had been appointed!!! No thank you for your services or explanation was given by anyone - we were left standing high and dry - what a frightful experience this was for us. It was indeed also a very bad experience for the whole parish community - one parishioner commenting that 'things will never be the same' and how right he was! Our dear parish priest Fr [-] had a heartache after the first Easter Liturgy was held in the parish - all the goings on, because we were now a Cathedral, was just too much for him. After he left, we had many new administrators taking over his role, all with varying results of community building. Quite a number of parishioners left the parish to neighbouring parishes.

- Being part of this community has been life giving—it was the Church, the diocese, saying we want you, we need you, we'll give you jobs, the bishop interviewed to give us jobs. Even though we did the Christian Formation and ministry course, I needed to know I had acceptance by the people of the parish. I have always felt that coming from the community, you have a richer understanding of the people and that is a good thing. As part of the Baptismal Preparation Team, we went through the process of holding a meeting with parents. The notes that were written up were given to a friend and a priest from overseas saw it and said 'Women can't do that.' This really upsets me, why can't I do it? What happened to lay ministry? Opportunity for involvement as lay people has diminished. 20 years ago, it was promised at a Diocesan assembly that it was part of the plan. Are we important or not? Giving lay people authority is an issue. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate as members of the Body of Christ—all lay people, including women and our young people.

A story about leadership—involvement in providing liturgies in the absence of the priest. The liturgy was provided but the lay ministers involved were not allowed to read the Gospel - very distressed that this seemed not possible. Another story, *Humanae Vitae*—on the prohibition of taking the pill and the announcement that birth control was forbidden. One could not use one's own conscience, as it was a mortal sin to practice birth control. Great bitterness and hurt experienced.

This year my 8-year-old twins received the sacraments of penance, Confirmation and Eucharist. When I was a child, we received our first Holy Communion at around 7 years of age and Confirmation later, in high school, when more adult issues e.g. sexuality were discussed and Catholic doctrine taught. Having remembered my own faith formation and instruction, I was deeply disturbed and disappointed by the way our diocese now administers the 'preparation.' It is my opinion that there is none. We paid a fee and were given workbooks and the parents advised to go home and instruct their children. The books were insipid, with infantile cartoon drawings, word finds, mazes and other games. It was totally devoid of substance. I was compelled to seek out and purchase the catechism books I used as a child which covered the topics I had previously assumed would be taught, including the nature of God, man's intended relationship with God, heaven, hell and the now taboo subject of 'sin.' The workbook provided did not use that word (so as not to cause offence?), preferring instead the phrase 'bad choices'. What a crock of horse poo.

Call it what it is. I imagine there were many parents who went through the motions with the rubbish books, imparting nothing of importance to their poor children, who having been confirmed at the age of 7 or 8 in complete ignorance of the doctrine, will likely not have another reason to revisit the catechism. The children are no longer required to wear suits or white dresses and veils to their first communion Mass, and it was almost like any other Sunday. 33 years later, I still remember my first communion. The photos are instantly recognisable by the clothing alone. I remember feeling like a little bride of Christ. No longer. It is no big deal now, no need to dress up, nothing to remember. We are losing our beautiful traditions to expediency and convenience. No wonder we have lost so many.

When I look at my journey through life with Jesus I see the following themes: 1) The beauty of his message of love and forgiveness, 2) The importance of the acceptance of Jesus into one's life, 3) The need to commence your own personal transformation and growth, 4) The need for fellowship and community to support transformation and growth - ensuring true spiritual growth together with prayer and good works, 5) Acceptance of the 'great commission' given to us all by Jesus, as individuals and as a community of believers in our part of the world.

In 1986, my husband of 42 was killed in a plane crash. His mum, a Catholic farmer's wife, who had reared 6 children in the Catholic faith, who took those children to Mass every Sunday, at the expense of hardly every being able to make it to her own Church of England because of the demands on a farm. Her children were her life and the sudden death of my husband caused her unimaginable pain. At the requiem Mass for my husband, she said to me that she wished she could receive Holy Communion. In those days, this was not allowed. Despite this, I asked one of the priests to bring her the Eucharist. At the graveside, this beautiful mother said to me "When I received the host, it was the first time since John's death that I felt some peace". I know now that it would be allowed and I am sure that Jesus did not refuse anyone the bread and fishes in the Bible. I have some very good Christian friends and I always feel terrible that they are not invited to receive the Eucharist when they come to Mass with me.

I am part of our parish Pastoral Council in a parish without a resident parish priest, and I have lamented the declining attendances at Mass over years. I feared for the future of the Catholic Church and felt partially disheartened that we could not see a clear future of prosperity. Then earlier this year I read *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Rebuilt* and *Divine Renovation* (within a few months) and this was a life-changing experience as I realised that my focus and possibly of many around me (including a number of the clergy) did not have a clear direction aligned with Jesus Christ's mission. This was further reinforced by my attendance at Proclaim 2018. The message in these publications is quite clear and challenging to dislodge the mentality of the "Consumer Catholic" and to regain our core message to be a missionary Church. I hope the Church will take these publications as a blueprint for the future, however I acknowledge that there will be casualties along the way for those that have been indoctrinated in the old ways and cannot cope with change. I'm certain that one of the reasons this personal revelation has occurred within me is that we do not have a resident parish priest but a Lay Pastoral Leader. I love the clergy but many of them can learn a lot from letting go of "clerical" attitudes. Pope Francis is an inspirational leader.

I've travelled overseas for my work and was in Malaysia when I attended a Catholic Mass. Their version of the Our Father was in modern English and I wonder why this is not used throughout the Western World. If the Church wants to move with the times, maybe consider re-issuing an Australian version in normal English that can be taught in schools. We already have embraced revised Mass prayers in recent years and with weekly repetition it wouldn't take long for another minor (but significant) change to be embraced by the active congregations.

Story 1; My eldest daughter stopped coming to Mass when she was approx. 16 yrs old (same as other 3 children) because she did not feel engaged. She is 30 and now goes to GoodLife Christian Church in Newcastle and I encourage her to embrace her faith in Jesus Christ (even if this is different brand to Catholic). I have attended a GoodLife celebration with her and they sing loud Christian songs, then they hear of a message from a pastor on something contemporary with reference to scriptures. They sing more than enjoy fellowship and plan what pastoral activities they will do during the month. Next month she is doing voluntary charitable work in Cambodia for 2 weeks.

Story 2: When I was in a Youth Group (40yrs ago) I remember doing loud Masses and noticing that the bulk of the parish didn't attend because "that was not for them"; I felt somewhat distanced from them. I am guilty of repeating this cycle because now I won't make the effort to attend things that they want. We need to meet them where they are.

Story 3: I went to Proclaim 2018 in Brisbane and attended the Ignite evening. I was blown away by the number and the faith of the youth present. It was humbling to see that the faith abounds, but the formal Mass structure may not be their preferred worship.

Story 4: A senior member of the clergy commented on the lack of youth attendance and some suggested comments that they found Mass "boring and irrelevant"; his response is that we are not here to entertain them. I think we need to engage youth where they are as they won't necessarily conform to our rigid structures; if we don't change, we risk losing them (forever). We need to form them in a relationship with Jesus, not count their attendance at Mass.

My two brothers, my two sisters and I were brought up in a strong Catholic family. Dad made us kneel after dinner and join him in 3 decades of the rosary—embarrassing if we had friends stay over but no exceptions. My sister Joy became a nun for years before leaving and having 6 wonderful children. My sister Gai's bedroom was like a shrine. I was close to many of the priests sent to Taree NSW where I live. I invited one of those priests John Denham to a birthday party at my home. I later learnt that Fr Denham—now a convicted paedophile—propositioned one of my teenage nephews. Neither he nor my brother (his father) or the rest of their branch of the family have darkened the doors of the Church since that time. Not even an assault—but what long-term damage has been done.

1. In our listening group, stories were told of attending Mass at Catholic schools where the pupils obviously had no idea what this liturgy was about. They were restless and cynical, making fun of the procedure. Teachers seemed inadequate to help them, even if they wanted it.

2. Another story was the experience of attending Mass in Australia with a congregation of predominately ethnic people, who demonstrated their lively style of participation. It made us

realise that liturgy actually expresses culture. But the culture expressed is often, in our Masses, not from the heart. Do we really understand the meaning of what we are doing?

I have avoided the Catholic Church for a long time due to your approach to child sexual abuse. You know what you did. What is worse is that you used ordinary people's money to pay lawyers to delay and defend your position, as well as making it just too hard for the individuals whose lives you ruined. I can't justify giving money to an organisation with this history. Had you been transparent in your finances, parishioners would have had the opportunity to query your legal expenses and how it was being (mis) used.

1. My daughter's marriage of 15 years was totally disrupted when it became evident that her husband's father was a paedophile and had interfered with her 3 year old daughter and 7 year old niece. Later on, it became evident that my son-in-law and his sister had also been sexually abused. As a result, the marriage gradually disintegrated leaving both my daughter and son-in-law devastated and unable to reconcile. My daughter now works for troubled children and adults, bringing a beautiful spirituality to all her work. However, she feels excluded by the Church because she is divorced and has recently fallen in love again and wishes to marry. She sees the process of annulment as interfering and judgemental towards her first marriage. She has left the Church and will be married by a celebrant. 2. As a former nun, married to a former priest, my faith values remained unchanged. However, we both felt judged by the local priest, so much so that we chose to attend a different Church. When I offered to help out with the music ministry, I felt unsure if the priest would accept me. He asked if I still went to Communion and I said it was my right to do so! He replied that the impediment did not lay with me or my husband but with the Church. So I continued with my involvement for many years. I ask myself why there is one rule for the first priest but a different rule for the second?? I believe that my children have been affected by this ambiguity even though they are very spiritual children.

1. My mother was not Catholic when she married dad and consequently was married in the Sacristy at Mayfield Church. This caused a great deal of trauma to her and later to the family despite the fact that she became a Catholic later on. (She said she was "married in the broom cupboard".) She refused to have her coffin in the Church when she died; if she wasn't good enough to be married in front of the altar then she wasn't going to be laid out in front of the altar when she died. THE JESUS IN ME LOVES THE JESUS IN YOU. 2. My Anglican friend asked me about receiving Communion in the Catholic Church. His daughter is married to a Catholic and is now converted and he'd love to receive Communion when he visits them and goes to Mass with them. He feels that this keeps them apart. Many Catholics go to Communion in other Christian Churches and are welcome to do so. THE JESUS IN ME LOVES THE JESUS IN YOU. 3. I volunteer for a humanitarian organisation and recently held a fundraiser Bush dance for a Catholic school, Church and Medical Clinic in Uganda. I asked the parish priest if I could advertise the Bush dance in the bulletin and my request was denied. The same thing happened with the Operation Christmas Child boxes which is an ecumenical project! THE JESUS IN ME LOVES THE JESUS IN YOU. 4. My son left the Catholic Church and is now a strong member of the Uniting Church because of the Catholic teaching on Homosexuality. He has many friends who are homosexual. Why is the Bible teaching on this taken literally yet other parts of scripture are not? THE JESUS IN ME LOVES THE

JESUS IN YOU. 5. When I was on the RCIA team we invited a well renowned Spiritual Advisor from the diocese to give a talk on "Jesus". One of the women on the team challenged part of her presentation and complained to the parish priest. The priest promptly condemned the guest speaker and rang me to berate me for inviting her without seeking his permission (even though she had given talks in the parish the previous year). The speaker was given no right of reply and told to present the full text of anything she would be presenting in future so that the priest could scrutinize it. He also threatened to report her to the bishop. WHERE IS THE MERCY IN ALL OF THIS?

At the recent funeral of my mother-in-law 2 weeks ago, the lesbian sister that has been the main carer of her mother over the last 10 or 20 years, became extremely distressed that she was "not allowed" to sprinkle holy water on her mother's coffin. Another of my sisters-in-law and I encouraged her to go ahead and sprinkle the holy water which she did and this made her much happier. My husband asked her later in the day who told her she couldn't, was it the priest? She said no. We now rather think it was her sister that arranged the funeral and who is more aligned to the right-wing Opus Dei movement in the Church.

I enjoy the monthly social gatherings with our small group.

One member spoke of his willingness to pay \$200+ for a trolley of groceries for a couple who had no credit on any of their three credit cards; but they left the trolley and the store before he has a chance to do so. He believes we need to be generous even if we think people may take advantage of us. In parishes in PNG where one of our members ministered as a lay missionary for many years, lay people tend to be much more responsible for the life of their parish than we are here in Australia. Whether they have a resident priest or not, members of the parish councils meet, decide what needs to be done and take responsibility for seeing that decisions are implemented.

One member's 8-year-old granddaughter recently received an award for what she wrote about Care for the Earth. More inter-generational conversation should be encouraged.

The Annulment process was a positive outcome for one person however another lady, with very similar circumstances, her request for annulment was declined. When an annulment is declined many turn away from the Church. Is annulment always necessary? Can it not be between God and the individual? Many are hurt by the outcomes of annulments. When a marriage fails those couples, or the Catholic person, should continue to feel welcome to receive the sacraments and the remarry in the Church.

The Church believes from the moment of conception to death is life, therefore abortion is a sin. But a baby dying of natural causes before birth (miscarriage) can be refused a funeral. How is this even possible? Going through school with a convicted child paedophile (priest) as your parish priest has turned large amount of families away from the Church. The Church has turned large amounts of people away due to the hiding and moving of paedophile priests to other parishes.

I feel for those who through no fault of their own have experienced marriage failure but then fear that they will be treated differently in the Church and be treated as an outsider. A staff member was refused communion at a school Mass because she was not married in the Church. The lack of welcoming from some members of the parish shown towards the Asian population entering our

parish community. The judgement of your faith if you are not married. My experience as a teacher in the Catholic school when I first interviewed for a position in a Catholic school I was informed that I interviewed very well but due to my relationship status (unmarried in a stable relationship for over 5 years) the priest would not accept me to teach even though I was a practising Catholic. I feel this judgement for many young teachers in our schools is unjust in the modern society.

- Questioning the infallibility of the Church.
- Good to know that Pope Francis wants a more local/decentralised Church. This will help us to better cater for our local contexts.
- Reflections on how some changes from Vatican II improved our Church e.g. no hats, guitars, English.
- The Church used to be a great community, but this has been lost, particularly in metropolitan areas. We need to find ways to bring it back.
- Catholic schools are important builders of community and hubs for our faith. They need to be connected and nourished.
- Experiences with nuns and brothers shared, when they were more included in the greater community. This is something we have lost now.
- Maybe we can learn from other traditions (e.g. 7th Day Adventists) and update our practices etc. to draw more people into our Church.
- Our environment is precious and we are not doing enough to look after it.

I was a protestant, (Church of England) as a child and drew away from the Church at an early age. I did whatever I wanted and whatever made me feel good. At 48 years of age I moved to [-] and my friends that I was staying with said they were going to Church so I decided to go with them. This was the Salvation Army. I did not become a Soldier because I liked to have a drink at Christmas with my family and friends. I broke the law badly and was put in gaol. I tried to become a better Christian in gaol and I think I succeeded. I did 12 years. While I was in there I was Baptised by the Anglican Minister. Upon release I started playing guitar for a homeless Centre and continued doing that for 6 1/2 Years. It was run by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, so the service was of course Catholic. I told people I would play at the service and worship God but I would not become a Catholic. After around a year and a half I started having the strongest feeling that the Virgin Mary was telling me to become a Catholic and to write a Hymn for Her. I told her I would not become a Catholic. Har Har! You don't say no to the Virgin Mary. She won of course and I became a Catholic and am so happy that I did. Did I write the Hymn? Yes. It is called 'Holy Mary'. Every now and then I still feel her presence in my life although I have never seen her or heard her voice. I don't know how I spent the first half of my life not loving Her. There is a lot more to that story but I have cut it short because of space. May God Bless you all. [-]

- It would be good to see the 'Church' being more actively involved in social justice initiatives which are being run by the laity.
- We need less of a divide between the 'collars' and the laity.

- It is a challenge for us to 'market' our faith as it stands in a contemporary context. Intelligent, well-read people question us and we struggle to find answers. Perhaps our dogma needs to be updated to suit our contemporary context.
- The Catholic Church has a degree of 'exclusivity' which affects the way people see the Church and their involvement with the Church. This needs to be broken down if we hope to live up to our own teachings about the importance of love for ALL.
- Having married men and women as priests would be one good way to help the Church to be more welcoming. They have more life experience and will be more understanding of people who come from 'icky' situations.
- Our Catholic schools are an incredible resource and are part of the reason the Church has survived. However, the Church really needs to consider how to use the schools to celebrate and develop our faith community.
- The Church needs to stand up for its strengths and address our discerning, contemporary audience.

I am a convert from Presbyterian Church I joined the Catholic Church in the [-] diocese. I now live in the [-] diocese. I can honestly say that I have been shaped by the people around me and the conversations. After completing the RCIA, I felt very lost, I had a thirst for knowledge that I could not quench. I managed to find a number of books to read to answer my questions. I found my local priest willing to give up a few hours each week to answer my more pressing questions. I joined the Legion of Mary, it was here I met wonderful strong Catholic women to help me in not only my faith but also what it is to be a single Catholic mother. I then attend Scene in Sydney this spurred me on to find out more about the different orders. From here I went to Jamberoo Abbey and discovered the Benedictines Nuns. In 2015, I joined the Abbey as an Oblate. My faith has had many twists and turns at times I wanted to run as far as I can from Church and God. God however seems to have other plans. I married outside the Church, the day after my spiritual director told me due to health issues he had to give up all his directees. Since moving to [-] diocese I have found it isolating as many people have been here for generations and having the family connection not only helps with breaking through social barriers but also in gaining employment. I haven't found my home church yet but I will keep looking. I'm still praying the Daily Office. I love the Church and I'm glad I'm Catholic but I pray for the future of it every day. I know several priests as friends and I know how much they struggle with isolation, clericalism and loneliness.

Clericalism—deeply entrenched. Even those clergy who disagree are trapped in it. Clericalism may not necessarily change with the introduction of women priests as they will be influenced by male priests. Renewal needs to be more than just changing the old system; rather, it needs to be about a complete change of structure. Parish council experience—only laity were present at the meeting and the members were enlivened by the discussion. Local parish looked at piloting a project which would have set up a new model with priests as equals, empowering the laity through their running of the parish. Vision eventually failed when too many parishes were added to the workload of the priest and he was then eventually moved to another area. Message from a sermon—"If you want to meet Jesus in an old person, leave your power at the door". The same applies to the Church: if you want to meet Jesus in a Church then priests need to leave their

power at the door. Pentecostal Churches are overflowing—what are they offering that we aren't? Relevance in their model and message. The Church represents 2000 years of tradition as an institution—there is heritage and beauty in this institution, but it needs to maintain its relevance. The number of baptisms and attendance at Christmas/Easter Mass shows evidence of a yearning within followers—this needs to be worked on to maintain their attendance and involvement.

Experiences of trying to help people in need, going to different organisations with Catholic in their name, but being fobbed off e.g. Catholic Care, Vinnies. Clerical attitude towards the laity involved in these organisations means that people often don't want to be involved in these organisations. They have become about power and business rather than love and compassion. There is a local Catholic Op shop where volunteers regularly help people who come in and ask for it. Their attitude is that they are not to judge, if help is requested then they help. This isn't always the attitude of these type of organisations. Paying school fees should not determine whether or not a student has access to Catholic education. People are often hamstrung in their efforts to help people because of the institutional/professional standards that limit what can be done, when and how. This often makes it difficult to marry up objectives of people with the mission of the Church.

Social justice is something which is important to us and which affects us everyday. It is also something that we can get involved in and do something about. Young people's experiences of Church are often negative—boring, strict, unengaging. The Church needs to develop and engage young people. Perhaps we need to use the ideas of some other religions or Christian denominations where young people clearly are engaged in their faith. The Church needs more freedom of expression of Spirituality. The traditions of Catholicism are very particular and do not allow for differences, which can be off-putting.

Unfortunately in the [-] diocese it is hard to think positively about the past but I would say the outreach work with refugees is inspiring and the quality educational experiences offered by lay teachers in Catholic schools is an ongoing positive in our region.

Recently in our Church, I noticed a young man arrive late to the Sunday Mass: he walked to the door twice before departing briefly and then returning with another young man. They arrived just as the Gospel was ending. They knelt to say their prayers. As the Homily concluded, an elderly and unwell man collapsed in the Church. The first young man ran from the back of the Church to assist. As it turns out he was an emergency care nurse from one of the big hospitals in Sydney. Also the only person with any medical training at Mass that day. He had debated with himself at the door of the Church whether he and his partner were too late for Mass and would need to come to a later Liturgy, realising however that they wouldn't be able to do that entered the Church. Without his presence in the Church our elderly parishioner could well have died while waiting for the Ambulance. This man and his partner have been in a gay relationship, stable and monogamous for a decade. Both have found a way to worship as Catholic men in the Church. I believe on that day God sent them to our Church, gave them the courage to enter and more importantly the strength to come forward to assist. It is disturbing that some in our Church and amongst our hierarchy would label them badly and make them feel unwelcome. I ask always what would Jesus have us do? What would Jesus do?

<p>My involvement with the Cursillo movement turned my faith around and has guided me since 1983.</p>
<p>Divorced in 1990, remarried in the Uniting Church in 1994. Did not get an annulment as my second wife was a non-Catholic but a Christian and she would have also got an annulment which is nonsense. Made a conscious and prayerful decision to use the internal arbitrator to continue practicing my faith and fully participating in the life of my parish. I am a very active member of the parish on the Finance Council and Parish Council.</p>
<p>I once was proud to be Catholic, but no longer. Leonard Cohen wrote a ballad called "Please Don't Pass Me By". If the bishops did one thing, I would ask them to listen to it.</p>
<p>My submission has been shaped by various situations I have experienced. My friend who has been divorced, cannot receive Holy Communion in the Church. She was deeply affected by this and left our Catholic Faith. My nephew is a transgender person who lives a very good life caring for himself and others in his life, but when at a Catholic school, was not accepted for who he really was.</p>
<p>We are a typical group of Catholics, female, male, secular and member of religious order, who grew up both as baby boomers and younger. We have lived through the best of times and the worst of times with the Church, whose post-Reformation structures have been exposed for their weaknesses and injustices.</p>
<p>I'm your typical 46yr old lapsed Catholic. I haven't been to Mass regularly for ten years. When I married my converted to Catholicism, an act of faith that I still admire to this day. Shortly after her conversion I learned that the priest who married my parents, baptised me and my siblings had sexually abused three boys I went to school with, one of whom I know well. I was further appalled when the Church appealed the guilty conviction of another priest who had knowledge of the crimes. At Mass the Church talks contrition but there is none. Now neither my wife nor myself attend Mass and although we believe and have faith in God. We have no personal relationship with the Church.</p>
<p>I am a gay man who has experienced discrimination (the Church fired me because of my sexuality); has endured hateful homilies from homophobic priests; and has endured a lifetime of never hearing a positive word at Mass about LGBTI people. I know God loves me as a gay man. I know God has blessed my 28-year relationship with my partner. I also know that can't fully love God unless I am part of God's Church. Not only won't I leave the Church—I can't leave. I wish Church leaders would share the affirmation of my sexuality and relationship that I experience from my fellow parishioners.</p>
<p>Celebrations of beautiful and dignified liturgy and holy, faithful priests in both the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (especially) and according to Divine Worship—The Missal have reawakened a zeal for God's Church, a call for holiness and a passion for the Gospel. This is not something I found in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite—in many parishes I found preaching that didn't motivate me with a zeal for holiness and liturgy celebrated poorly and even offensively didn't give glory to God, and a people of God that did not seek him or glorify him through their piety or lives, sadly.</p>

Yes, most definitely! I am a convert having joined the Church in the 1980's. Unlike a lot of Catholics (I find) I have engrossed myself in a lot of reading. Spiritual reading. I love the saints and the BVM apparitions. I cannot believe that the Church pays very little importance to these historical miracles both past and present. I feel we need to bring back to the classrooms stories like Fatima, where an 8 year old Jacinta Marto converted convicts she was locked up with to fervently pray the rosary. What an inspiring true story to tell school kids; one that they would surely relate to. Padre Pio (a most recent saint) with the stigmata, bi-location and other numerous miracles is MY most favourite saint who has inspired me time and time again to renew my faith in ever deeper ways. How many Catholics even know who Padre Pio was? The Catholic faith has all the mysticism that I sought in the 70's through Eastern religions and the Beatles "guru" phrase. I have found the Catholic faith to be a wonderful powerhouse of miraculous stories and lives and I see very little of this being promulgated in our schools and in our society. I think the world needs more belief and faith, which the Catholic Religion has in spades; so please use it for God's sake!

No noticeable experiences but I have never forgotten about Christ's existence on earth. Remarkable fella he was.

I myself was born into the faith, and have found the Church has filled my life, I have needed.

I was born in 1953 so have experienced both pre and post-Vatican Catholicity. I can relate to the earlier times of stricture as we were coming out of a post-war period, but the light of the Vatican II is so fantastic and has so much still to offer our Church in which I have enormous faith, despite the problems and setbacks. I was a leader in the YCS days at school and found an enormous enthusiasm amongst young people that WYD is continuing. Please look to the wisdom of the elders in our parishes for continuity of faith and a greater understanding of Church.

I have delved into every possible part of the Church that the laity is able to within my diocese and my comments are based on these experiences. God is always asking us to do the hard things in pursuit of righteousness and I don't believe that such things are capable of coming from the governing structure of the Church at this time. If they can't come from individual dioceses, they will not come from the Plenary Council. Despite good intentions of individuals, there are too many conflicts of interest. I will be pleasantly surprised and thank God if the Plenary Council does not behave like the rich young man. The future of the Church lies with individuals and families who are hungry for Christ and do what they can in these times to keep their faith burning bright. God bless.

Summary of group: There is a perception (rightly or wrongly) that the "clergy" are infallible and that the laity are not "anoointed" to undertake God's Mission; this is the understanding of many people (older Catholics and some clergy) almost as a tenet of faith. Recent [-] clergy issues have challenged this and have mandated the need to change. Elderly Catholics in Nursing homes have difficulty in grasping the concept of lay ministers because of their life long experience of priests doing everything. Some youth converts to Catholicism do not always feel welcome because they have not been brought up in the faith and are not familiar with all customs. The shortage of priests has necessitated the need for Lay parish Leaders, Lay liturgical leaders, SCAE reflection givers, funeral ministers, etc. This will most likely need to be extended to include baptisms and marriages; it is understood that some non-clergy have permission already to undertake these; we

need to be consistent in our approach and make it universal. The distribution of priests in Australia does not seem fair when carved up on a diocesan level. Some are much better off than others. Lay involvement seems to require excessive "training" or instruction (many hours over many sessions) which is not always possible to attend when offered on rigid timetables; With a passion to serve should unreasonable impediments place in front of those who want to serve in some capacity. Is all formal training e.g. for Lay Liturgical Leaders absolutely necessary? Is our Lay led model in [-] "merely tolerated" to exist because of circumstance, or is it being seriously reviewed as a potential model for the future of the Church. Something like this may be imposed on other parishes at the drop of a hat. Laity are getting more involved in many ministries and bring a wealth of experience to complement the priest. Even if we were to miraculously get more priests, we need to retain this model as it is not only sustainable, but is the true calling of all lay people. We don't won't to go back to older models where the laity were considered sheep merely following the pastor. I have attended Mass at parishes where the priest attempts to do/control everything; these parishes don't appear to be alive. The Catholic Church does not have all the answers and we must not only support but be seen to actively support other "secular" ministries, e.g. Food Pantry. We do need to be ones who suggest every good deed, but we must openly support these and acknowledge their contribution to the betterment of society and social justice. A relative has left the priesthood and got married. He is still a valuable but now unused resource for God's Mission. The Church should consider special roles for lay women (similar to deacons) to give them the tools and necessary recognition among the community/faithful to further God's Mission. Mothers have one of the greatest capacities to love and forgive. Let the Church formally tap this resource.

I have always felt very included and part of something. My faith has given me that. It is part of my identity. I really want that feeling for others. As I'm writing I'm remembering people that I know that are currently excluded, for many reasons. I don't have to worry about those reasons, or fix those. My call is to include.

As a new convert to Catholicism and a former Anglican I was puzzled to learn that the Mass was delivered in Latin up until the 1970 and further amassed that Bible reading was NOT encouraged. I wondered why and thought that it smacked of an attempt to CONTROL a captive audience. A Church hiding from possible criticism. I can understand the HISTORICAL importance of using Latin (an official language which was used in science and philosophy etc. and the need to have the message of Christ delivered without adulteration by local dialects). I can also understand that as most Churchgoers could not read or write so the reading of the Bible was in the hands of the priests. Printing was an expensive exercise and so the Bible was too valuable to allow universal access. Times have changed and we need the Church to stop being so guarded...so afraid of change. Follow the example of Jesus. He was brave enough to confront the existing and misguided teachings of the Synagogue...Follow his example.

The wonderful experience of Antioch. Connections to those who have been victims of abuse in the Church.

To be more engaged in Social Justice issues. Looking at the rate of homelessness especially young people.

A member of our group shared this with us. This whole listening and dialogue experience has made this person think more deeply about the role he/she will need to play in this "new path" of our Church. The spirit is reminding Him/Her that at baptism we were launched on a journey as His disciples and is reminding us that God Is God and that he should have first place in our lives before all else. That he/she will have to move outside their comfort zone to be part of the outcomes of the Plenary Council.

1. Those victims of abuse within our Church can be further traumatised by being confronted by the Honour/History board in the foyer of our Church which includes priests who have been convicted of abuse. Some of these parishioners feel that their trauma has not been validated and are distressed by this practice. 2. Recently, a pastoral visit was organised for a patient in a Mental Health Unit. Visits of this nature have to be very carefully vetted. Our Curate came for such a visit and it gave great spiritual support to the patient at the time. These visits are only possible with a patient's request. 3. When I applied for my grandson to make his First Communion and Confirmation, we were told by the priest that he couldn't because there were too many in the group. I had to ring [-] to get him included as he was getting older at the time and I felt this would be a lost opportunity.

I would like to share my experience of faith in the Church by talking about the movement of CL, but time is running out for me this evening, My most influential experiences of faith are in the Liturgy and in the charity work I do with Vinnie's (bringing food vouchers to the poor) and when I bring Holy Communion to people in an aged care home.

I was raised a Catholic but went away from the Church in my teens. I returned when I was about 30. I moved to the NT and needed to make friends. The choices were friends from the pub, sporting interests, friends from work or return to holiness and go back to Church. I chose the latter. Being part of a charismatic community about 10 years later helped me to deepen my faith. I "felt" the presence of the Holy Spirit as a tangible spirit. I moved to the [-] area about 9 years ago. I love the community here but we are all seniors. This is not necessarily attractive to the young.

I have received input from friends who are NOT Catholic or Churchgoers who criticize the history of the Church. They believe that God is a lie. They believe that "religion" is the cause of wars and many of the world's problems. The Church has interfered with Indigenous races who now have lost their culture because of the Church.

At the age of 9 years, 2 years after my first communion, I had my beautiful relationship with Jesus disrupted for 16 years by scruples because a poorly educated priest told me I had been committing mortal sins by "bad confessions" because at my first communion I did not include something that I now confessed to him. I was 4 years old at the time of my "mortal" sin.

*I raised my children with a "fear factor of God". This is not the right way. Should be done differently with love and not fear. *As children we believe in God. Went to Catholic schools but not enough religious teaching. Very difficult for children today now have limited understanding. *Raised a Catholic. Chose a different path because Church is boring. Children/youth feel that Church is boring. *Raised with mixed messages about Church. Raised in a dysfunctional family

environment. Now married, spouse has helped me with my faith. Must start practicing the faith as a young family. Children can portray God as a "nasty" God, can be scared of God. *Grew up in a small Church community with a loving priest. The priest speaking to children and parents was very uplifting. Missions were wonderful. Giving the fullness of the Church. *Husband not a practicing Catholic. Happy that I attended a Catholic school. More advice needed when you marry and then again as a young family to raise children with the faith. Confessional were very threatening. Happy when I returned to the Church. Felt like "home". Reborn and happy. Want more for the youth. *Grew up in a non-Catholic family. Agree that life was uneasy when I was young. I attended Mass on Sundays and Catholic School. Grew up with God in fear of doing the wrong thing. Now a God of love. Feel that generations of the Church are lost because young families do not teach faith. *Raised a Catholic and left the Church in my teens. Church was boring and uncool. I moved interstate, a new life/beginning. Which direction do I take to form friendships/interests etc. Pubs, sporting events etc. chose to return to the Church. Since then, about 30 years ago, experienced that Charismatic Churches/gatherings seem to attract the youth and young adults. We need to make holiness attractive to the youth so that they seek God. *Some children do not know what the statues are in the Church. One was overheard when a child pointed to the Stations of the Cross and asked their parent what it was? The reply was "just a picture".

In the group of student leaders for 2019, 6 of the 8 students weren't Catholic. But they believed in the Catholic school system. They shared views about the contact they had with priests but fail to relate to them as opposed to relating to pastors in the variety of churches they attend.

Born to the Faith, I have had many occasions to learn and grow as a person, at our parish. The young women formed a group with the help of the parish priest we studied religious books including Bible study. Sr. Colleen Casey ran different courses. We had many social functions, I was a part of it all. I enjoy my Faith and Church.

The group felt that if you attended church and were not Catholic, you were left out. Their experience of church included being distracted and they were explaining ways such as having greater involvement and being able to see what was happening as ways of supporting their attention to what was happening.

The students were feeling a disconnection from the Church and used practical examples that to them exemplified this such as the lack of colour, uncomfortable nature of the seating, lack of involvement in the practices by the youth, lack of modern facilities such as air conditioning, technology, places for people with disabilities, places that engage the youth. They felt that things like morning tea after Church might be more welcoming.

The group discussion here was about the place of women in the Church. 1. When I go to Church I always see Fr G and I wish there was a female influence like a nun or a woman in a higher position because I think it would be better for a girl to understand and want to be part of Church if they had some female influences. I am not saying there should be no males, I am saying that it should be equal. 2. I think there should be female priests so people can get a true understanding of what religion is about. 3. Females do not play a big role in the Catholic community, not because they don't want to, but because they're not given the opportunity. We want female bishops and one day we could have a female Pope. More nuns won't be good enough. 4. I think there should be

leather seats in a Church because the Church has to keep on buying pillows for the elderly bottoms. I think there should be nuns to bring people to the Church because of their singing. 5. Every time I go to church, I see Fr G. and I think that a female priest would be a good change in the Church. I don't like how males only can get to be priests but females don't. I think it should change because it gets boring always seeing a male in the Church and sometimes that can be sexist to females who would like to be priests. 6. I think that there should be nuns in Church. 7. I think the Church should allow females to run the Church. Some girls might think that the Church is sexist and this will mean that fewer people will go to Church.

1. I think the Church should be more interactive for children because instead of sitting there listening to a priest speak, we could do an activity on what he is speaking about. Each time we attend Mass we could have an activity that we have to do after we leave like pick up rubbish, help God's creatures and not litter or kill them. When listening to music it is boring and we could have interactive music to get them into it and to love the Church. 2. I think the Church could be more interactive with children by encouraging boys and girls to do altar serving, doing more readings to fully understand the Mass and be more involved, have more youth Masses that way children are more active and understanding of God. These examples all represent ways we could let children be more interactive so children can learn, grow and involve Jesus in the lives of our youth. 3. I know that in Church, we kids just sit there bored to death, falling to sleep almost because there is nothing to do at Church except sit there and listen to someone talk. Kids are hopeless at sitting still and absolutely hate it. If Church was more interactive for kids they would enjoy it more and take more interest. They would also learn and be engaged. 4. My opinion is that if the Church was more interactive, kids would not be as bored and it would be less hard to stay focused. Church still needs to be about Jesus and serving the Lord, not just one big playground. 5. More things that little kids understand better, more jobs and readings for kids, the priest ask more real-life questions for children to answer, different Masses so that kids don't see exactly the same thing every time they go to Church. 6. Get more questions that the priest asks the other kids to make it interactive, talking to the kids more about the whole thing to make them understand more about it.

1. If the Church listened to us, the Church would work on going outside and cleaning the creeks of rubbish and giving money to the homeless. 2. My opinion is if the Church is so focused on the environment then why don't we get down and dirty by helping and making a start with the environment. 3. My opinion is that everyone should enjoy the Church in their activities and that they should start doing things like picking up rubbish for our environment because if we don't, marine life dies. 4. If we focus on doing things together in the environment then everyone gets involved. 5. I think focusing on the environment would be good because it would educate us on the creation of God. This would be a hands-on activity to understand the creation of God. This would also help the environment in many ways from cleaning up to planting and new growth in our community. 6. My opinion is that working in the environment would get the children involved and see what is happening to our world.

One January about ten years ago, I was holidaying with my friends in Dubbo. We went to Sunday morning Eucharist. The celebrant was a New bishop holidaying with his friend, the parish priest of [-]. The gospel was from John 15; and opened with, "As the Father has loved Me so I have loved

<p>you. Remain in My love...." At the homily time the bishop said to us, "I want you to sit quietly and imagine that Jesus is saying to you personally [As the Father has loved Me so I love you. Remain in My love.] and notice happens in you." I encountered Jesus that day...</p>
<p>I prayed for God's guidance in answering the plenary council question. I then spent fifteen minutes in contemplative prayer without reflecting directly on the question. When I arose to write, the word that came to me was metanoia. I sensed that I had received my answer. I went to the dictionary to clarify the meaning of the word. The Oxford dictionary defined metanoia as Change in one's way of life resulting from penitence or spiritual conversion. 'What he demanded of people was metanoia, repentance, a complete change of heart'. As I write this story it comes to me that in the gospel reading for today 12 February, it says "He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honours Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" Mark 7:6-7 NKJV [-]</p>
<p>Families in the local parish who are multi-faith—One Catholic and other another Christian Denomination—have a struggle to be heard, accepted and respected. Communion is a big issue for these families. One family with 3 children struggle to explain this lack of inclusion to their children; alongside the other messages of the gospel it is an obvious conflict.</p>
<p>I have not always followed the teachings of the Church, but when I re-converted, I studied and learned much more about my faith, which is my most precious gift, which God in His mercy has allowed me to re-discover ever more deeply. We need more teaching from the Catechism in the Homily, so many do not know even the basics. Australians are so friendly and kind, but we need good teaching, right teaching. Many leave the Church because they are "not being fed", we receive the Eucharist!!! But we also need RIGHT instruction.</p>
<p>My Marist education and other aspects as previously subscribed.</p>
<p>I am a cradle Catholic. I have seven siblings. I went to Catholic schools and now teach in a Catholic school. I am an active Catholic who has faith in the message Jesus gave. The good news that God loves us and wants a relationship with us. I have been gutted by the fact that the child sexual abuse has occurred. I have struggled with the fact that good people knew and did nothing. I believe we should have been leading the way and shining the light not covering things up. I continue to struggle with this. Only one other sibling still attends church and it can be difficult explaining my continued faith in the Church when there have been unspeakable failings. I believe we need to more actively encourage the laity to become leaders in our Church. The ordained need to be respectful of what the laity have to offer and what we have to say. We know God too. I pray that through the plenary council 2020 the will of God will be revealed by his people. I pray that there will be a deep change in Church culture. I believe if we do not change we will die and eventually rise again a new creation. Perhaps that is what is needed. A death and resurrection before we gain the new life we crave. I just hope I see it in my life time.</p>
<p>1. Our local Catholic High School held a fundraiser for drought affected farmers to coincide with the school's Feast Day celebrations. The students dressed in farming clothes on the day. A Mass was held at the school and a visiting priest presided. At the end of the Mass the priest vehemently berated the students for their attire and their behaviour. 2. Our local Deacon, who facilitates</p>

activities including retreats for the Catholic High School was planning the Retreat Program. A teacher at the school, who is also a friend of ours has told us how meaningful these retreats usually are for the students. The Deacon invited the priest to be involved in the Retreat. Subsequently, the priest requested a copy of the program and made a number of changes which apparently caused disappointment to the facilitators and diminished the success of the Retreat.

3. The same Deacon has organised various Social Justice activities, fundraisers and trips. In the past the students have worked with The Salvation Army, the Wayside Chapel, St Vincent de Paul and the Samaritans. They have also participated in preparing hampers for distribution at Christmas. If the Deacon is moved from our region, these events may stop altogether.

4. Our group commented that young people have judged the Church as being irrelevant to them. They do not accept things as readily as young people in the past. Their needs are not being met, spiritually or liturgically and many are influenced by the Church's poor record of abuse. Young people need to hear some Good News to encourage them to be involved again. They need to be needed through various Social Justice activities and Liturgies attuned to their understanding.

1. I have been involved in various Church ministries in a number of different parishes for a long time and have been fortunate to complete studies in Catholic Universities as required by my role in Catholic schools. In my current parish, I have been berated and verbally bullied by the parish priest:

a) I was trained as an Animator for the Plenary Council but was berated in an email because I invited members of my small Mass centre to participate in an Information session and Listening and Dialogue sessions. The priest told me I could not advertise in the parish Bulletin or facilitate these sessions until the parish Council prepared a "strategic plan" for the Plenary Council in our parish. He also berated the Congregation during Mass for beginning the Listening and Dialogue sessions before the other Mass centres. He said we "should not be proud" as we were "not synodal".

b) Last year I was asked to support the RCIA in our parish as I had many years' experience in previous parishes. It became apparent that we needed some texts for the program so I sent a letter to the Parish Council requesting the funds. The parish priest made the decisions without consultation with the PPC. He accepted our need for the "At Home with God's People" texts but said we didn't need Study Bibles for the catechumens and candidates. We had been using Bibles borrowed from the local Primary School which were fine for finding texts etc. Members of the team had already donated other resources but we thought it would be good to have a budget for the texts used by everyone. We received a written reply eventually from the PPC which was quite insulting and in parts condescending. Some RCIA team members purchased or donated other resources instead. At the same time, \$80,000 was spent on replacing concrete crosses on the main parish Church. I felt that the Church's priorities were hard to understand.

c) The RCIA team decided to invite a Josephite sister to speak to the group on "Jesus". This nun has been integral to our parish and the diocese for many years and still offers Spiritual Direction here. She ran the course for the Laity over a number of years and is still active in the diocese. After her talk, a couple of team members complained about some of her statements as being non-doctrinal e.g. Jesus did not know He was God until the Resurrection. Consequently, I received a phone call from the parish priest berating me for not seeking permission to invite this nun. He threatened to speak to the bishop, asked for the full text of any future talks to be handed in before the meeting and didn't at any time speak to the nun involved. She was never given a right of reply. Subsequently I left the RCIA group after our Program had finished for the year. The PP

asked me for a formal letter of resignation. I wrote to him confidentially noting the good initiatives he had brought to the parish and asking him to trust that others are willing to run the parish ministries but need his support.

1. My daughters are strong, faithful women in the Church. They work in subordinate roles without decision-making or discernment power. 2. I became a nun as a young woman joining the Little Sisters of the Poor. My family were happy for me to enter. However, when a son was ordained a priest, it gave the family great kudos and social standing in the community. 3. The nuns in Australia have quietly spoken the truth even in their older years. Many have been treated badly. 4. In other denominations, women priests multitask, managing well and they have been shown to be capable, nurturing, intelligent, peacemakers and incredibly strong. 5. Our married Deacon is incredibly busy. He and his wife are very pastoral and he is often called upon as a preferred celebrant at Funerals and Baptisms. He has a realistic understanding of normal family life.

I was born into a Catholic family with three of my grandparents of Irish Catholic descent and a strong parish pre-Vatican II community and school system. It was in many senses a "ghetto" but I did not know that. I went to Catholic boarding school and entered a religious order at the age of seventeen. A typical story. During the period of my novitiate there were two young curates in the parish who were on fire with their recent education in the faith and the current teachings of Pope Pius XII and his encyclicals *Mediator Dei* and *Mystici Corporis Christi*. They gave us lessons and engaged in meaningful liturgical celebrations. One of them subsequently arranged annual Christmas holiday lectures/seminars for the religious and priests of the diocese (men notable by their absence) from two highly regarded international biblical scholars who opened our eyes to the intelligent reading of the old and new testament. It was exciting to be so educated and prepared for the earthquake of the Second Vatican Council. Christ was real and the scripture our friend and the liturgy our nourishment. This has stood me in good stead for the rest of my life and kept my faith vibrant and alive. What happens in our youth affects deeply the rest of our life. High standards. Good education. The documents of Vatican II are still very relevant and largely unknown. Camps and seminars to train the leaders of the future. Can this happen again today. Surely it can. The material will be appropriately modernised but the outcomes will be lasting. Without such uprising of new effort and impetus I fear for the further withering on the vine of the Australian Catholic Church.

This group of 70-80 year olds lament the loss of the Church that was. Actually they are grieving for their loss but little support is offered to them.

One member of our group told how at one Good Friday ceremony she was on the roster to read the Passion when the priest told her she was not needed as it was a "man's" right to read it. Women have to be accepted in ALL roles in the Church, not just for cleaning the brass.

When I joined the Church as a young adult, I found it hard to be included. It was through one priest in particular that I was able to make a difference in my community. Without his support, I wouldn't have continued to go to Church and learn about Catholic identity. I am now the Children's Liturgy Coordinator and I work as a Catholic School Teacher. I would love to see more young people involved in our Church but I know there is a resistance to attending when the

service is boring (sung, organised and ran only by older parishioners). Along with this, people are resisting due to what has happened lately with the Church and their lack of inclusiveness.

Ever since my earthly mother handed me some material from Our Lady's appearances at Garabandal, I have been learning about and avoiding doing what I am being asked to do. This wasn't my choice as I really don't want to do it, but I am being prompted to be her witness in 2019 and onwards. I love the Catholic Church, and having discovered the truth, and I am willing to defend the Church and help many souls from going to perdition.

I was brought up in a Catholic family of 9 children, with dad attending daily Mass, encouraging all of us to attend with him. Dad also helped with St Vincent de Paul and would be out on many cases. Mum had a more silent role in the Church attending to her babies and praying quietly with her and her Jesus. The family would always pray the Rosary each evening and the little infant Rosary in the morning. As I became a teenager I joined the local youth group and ended up marrying one of the other youth group leaders in [-]. Our youth group always had guitar Masses to attend and we loved feeling part of the Church. We as youth were given the acceptance as being a valuable part of the Church. As I moved into our marriage our life changed and we became parents of eventually 11 children. When I was pregnant with our 4th child I had many questions about my faith and wondered was going to Mass all there was to Church. The Lord heard my cry and I found the charismatic renewal, which was my saving grace. I discovered a prayer life that was suited to me, where I could pray in my own way and know that God would always care and hear me. As I've become older and still caring for the younger members of my large family I find it restricting to attend all the training sessions required to be involved in the Church. I still play the music with others and help organise the liturgy, but find training to be involved in any other ministry is demanding. I don't understand why we can't just be volunteers and be appreciated without pieces of paper attached to ourselves. Don't get me wrong. I love the Church.

Everywhere I travel I attend Churches where the congregation is predominately old, yet modern "songs" or hymns are sung which no one sings, but when hymns from before spirit of Vatican II are occasionally used, EVERYONE joins in. Is that significant? I vividly remember hymns I sang many years ago, can still sing them. In a bid to be modern, we seem to have thrown out the baby with the bath water.

I am a professional struggling to live my Catholic faith in my family, work and social life. I dearly love the Catholic Church and her teachings and rely heavily on the grace and help that she gives to me in my daily life. I respect the freedom of all individuals to live and behave how they want to even if it is outside of Church teachings. I do get angry and frustrated with those who do not respect us who want to be faithful to Jesus Christ, His teachings and His Catholic Church which He established. I do realise that some Catholic teachings are hard to understand and live but know that those teachings such as not ordaining women priests, not permitting abortion, contraception, or divorce are all to help us achieve our eternal salvation. I am hopeful for mine, my families and my friends' salvation.

1. Faith is everywhere. You should not have to go to Church to be seen to have done the right thing. 2. Grew up in 2 different parishes where 4 parish priests ended up in jail for paedophilia. Have witnessed Father [-] telling children to "shut it". Spent my childhood altar serving,

commentating and involved in the music and now I sit in a Church and can't help but hear hypocrisy. My parents stopped going to Church after 40+ years and we don't take our children. I send my children to Catholic school because I believe in the Christian values, but I'm afraid my experiences have me viewing the Church in Australia more as an institution, or boys club. I can't build that faith in my children if I no longer have it. I can't force them to be involved in something that I have lost respect for. Instead, we've found a Church that has a married pastor, fabulous music and real sense of community (our age). Much to my devoted Catholic grandmother's disgust! 3. I was raised in church as a child, attended church and sang in the choir, but had no personal relationship with God. As an adult, I found myself in an abusive relationship, a victim of domestic violence with 2 young children. In desperation I cried out to God and He responded in miraculous and unexpected ways. Over the last 20 years, God has revealed Himself to me time and time again. Showing His unfathomable love and concern for each of us. I have experienced both the good and the bad in Church life both in Australia and around the world. I know what it is like to be in a genuinely loving and compassionate Church family, which makes it painfully difficult to attend a superficially friendly Sunday service with no real care, concern or connection. My faith walk is a very personal daily venture, one I share respectfully and readily with those who ask. 4. I grew up with a strict Catholic mother. I consider myself Catholic. My children are Catholic, however I do not enforce the faith like my mother did. I do not think there was anything wrong with what my mother did. I just think times have changed.

What has been apparent to me from a young age as a practising Catholic, is that an example of an exemplary Catholic living a life worthy of Christ has been all about the individual's tolerance, compassion, and humility, and nothing to do with whether he or she follows the outdated edicts of the Church, such as sexual discrimination, birth control, marriage. In this modern world moving at a tremendous pace with a million voices through social media, people are desperate for compassion, understanding and care, not outdated rules. In my view if the Church is to stay relevant it must now become the shepherd it started out as, and leave behind this current model of authoritarian ruler. 2. I have always had a deep belief in God but have not always attended church as it always seemed intimidating and a bit outdated. Lately my faith has been extremely tested and I am unsure about anything to do with Our Father in Heaven he seems to have left. 3. I have loved and struggled with the Church for my entire life. In my childhood, I was happy to attend Church with my family each Sunday. However as I grew into my teen's older member's in my family found the strength to speak up about the abuse they received at the hands of their local Catholic priest's. It has left my entire extended family devastated, shocked, guilty and upset with the Catholic Church. I have always had special bonds with local nun's and have gained much spiritual enrichment from retreats and prayer sessions with many strong women in the Church. That is what sustains me today. I occasionally attend Church with my young family and at times feel very distant from the celibate priest and do not relate to his lack of understanding of types of love for example. I act with love in my daily life. Love is a verb, doing and action interest me. I teach this to my family and think this is actually what God really want us to do. I hope and pray for a time when the Church is run like a real family and everyone is treated equally. 4. Being with my Mother during palliative care, sharing this time with immediate family but also congregation members that came to pray/sing and offer support. It was a very big reminder of the sense of community within our faith. 5. I believe that values, respect and faith are far more important than

adherence to "rules". Being brought up in a Christian environment has been hugely beneficial to me and has instilled my belief in this. That is why I believe that any/some association with the Church—Catholic or other—is better than the all or nothing that many people believe must be the case. People shouldn't feel that if they can't be the perfect Catholic /Christian that they shouldn't be any Catholic/Christian at all. That has shaped my approach to my faith, I am comfortable with that but I have had to come to that on my own and experience other denominations to arrive there.

I grew up in a strong Catholic family and my parents shaped me as a person by their great example and the great people they are. I have always endeavoured to do the same with my children and set a great example by trying to live by the message of Christ. My older children do not come to Mass every week, but I keep inviting them and they come regularly.

I have been a cradle Catholic, but have struggled with belonging or continuing to go to church during my life (even though I attend probably three times a month but there have been times I have not attended for over 3 month intervals), however I believe twice when I really needed the Church and in particular God (and my faith) he was there for me at desperate times. Praying and being with people who are like minded helped me, when my marriage was failing and we were becoming distant as a couple, faith got me through and God spoken to me that I had to take some accountability and action and do something more as my part in this commitment and my vows. When we had our first child I got post-natal depression and was at my lowest of all time, faith by praying and attending Church got me through. I realise the Lord hears our prayers and will answer them in his time, not our time. I learnt a great deal through this time about myself and others in my community. Growing up there was a great deal of guilt about going to Church and even though I go now I have this decision to go as I enjoy it but also this guilt that I have to go, not to get to heaven but to say I am a Catholic. I am currently struggling so much about the Catholic Church and the people who are in power and the terrible things that have happened in our diocese, I wonder at times why I still go. I sometimes tell myself that yes these things have happened but my faith is a relationship between myself and the Lord. The reason I still attend Church is to remind me of this relationship, as if I don't I get busy and rarely stop to reflect on this relationship.

My parents formed my faith in my youth by their example, their daily attendance at Mass, this of course in the Latin era. In my return to Church participation in the last perhaps ten years or so it has been through participation in my parish, the Funeral Ministry, Lay Liturgical Leader, Reflection giver, Communion minister to a local hospital. Through service and engagement I feel part of my community. Let the winds of change blow through us and renew us

I describe my experience of faith in the attached article. I would also like to share my thoughts on the issues surrounding child sexual abuse, possible contributing factors and proposed remedies.

Being a cradle Catholic Pre Vatican -2 I was blessed to be born in a good Catholic home taught by good nuns and priests who were role models and taught us about God Our Blessed Mother the saints and martyrs of our Church. It gave us an idea of what our Church stood for and throughout my life my Catholic faith has been the one thing that has been my lifeboat, my rock. I love my Church and am proud to be a Catholic and wish others could share this privilege.

I have been a volunteer in our parish for over 52 years, recently I have had to fill out form to allow me to still volunteer even to take up the gifts. Many people have decided not to volunteer anymore. God asked us to volunteer in any capacity we could to keep our faith alive. I feel that the leaders of our Church are letting us down and not making us welcome in our own Churches.

I used to go on a retreat every year and I found that this gave me direction and the energy required to continue to follow my faith. But as we no longer have the opportunities to continue with these retreats I find a longer for more deepening and spiritual understanding of our faith. I find that now where schools have moved away from the parish for Masses that the children do not learn the respect of the Mass and need for stillness and quiet time for prayers but this is also the parents' responsibility to teach the children respect for the Church and people. I enjoyed the opportunities I had growing up and believe that it has help me to grow in my faith and I continue to be involved in our parish life.

What's the hurry I've been to more and more Masses in NSW where the Mass happens at double quick time—all over in the blink of an eye. I feel disturbed in spirit, however, the regular parishioners seem to happy to be on their way out of the Church. This is making me appreciate those Masses that are reverently undertaken in a relaxed manner, where silence has a place and the peace of Christ rests on all those participating.

In my faith journey I have come to rely upon prayer in my daily life. The days I struggle to pray are the very days I find myself struggling with the day. The days I push myself through prayer I find my spirit supported in those prayers.

My journey of faith has been inextricably shaped by the overwhelming love and acceptance that I received from the parishioners of my mother Church. Those communities where I have been greeted so very warmly and completely embraced within them have been like gushing springs, full of life, rich oasis's that nourish the soul. It is this loving hope from the Holy Spirit that I believe provides the people of faith in Australia the way forward.

I am currently part of a parish community under the moderator model of canon 517.2. Where necessity has changed the circumstances of this community, the response of the parish has transformed our ways of doing things. Out of necessity, we have far greater collaboration between clergy and laity, greater involvement of parishioners in leadership and service, and a greater openness to follow the spirit into uncharted waters. And now, by choice, the community is embracing the possibilities this alternate model presents. We are choosing to discern and reimagine our mission and vision, and allowing new life to emerge in unexpected places. We are choosing to listen to each other, and realise we do monopolise the spirit. We are actively choosing to be in relationship and accepting that this is challenging, and demands humility and actively seeking forgiveness. We are choosing to enter those spaces where there is pain and discomfort. I write this because our Church, by necessity, is moving into uncharted waters. There will be change, and there will be pain. And though we may go reluctantly, though we may be pushed by the world around us, we should not be afraid of what will grow out of the ashes. If the spirit calls us into the wilderness, then there we will find ourselves, and be better for it.

I am a lifelong Catholic. I am Australian but born of European immigrant parents. I am attracted to anything within the Church that has a spirit of goodwill, particularly anything that encapsulates that spirit in families. I have worked for the Catholic Schools Office in my diocese, and for Catholic Care. I have been involved in Adult Formation, SRE and Youth Ministry and helped start a number of initiatives that are still going for young people in my diocese. I am part of the Cursillo movement. I have had valuable cultural experiences in creating group activities. I was a leader in a national football league. Initially I helped form a supporters' group for a football club before going on to work for the club itself. I became a student of willing and voluntary participation. I had to understand and utilise the gifts of individuals and had to understand what they had the capacity to do and what they were reluctant to do given the culture we live in. I became a student of the Australian culture. I also observed how their spirit impacted the crowd in general and devised methods to spread that spirit. I became a student of spirit. I used this knowledge in all my Catholic activities. My understanding is that most Australians do not like being the centre of attention. They have a generally reserved nature and don't see it as a fault. However, I see that the Mass as it currently is puts a great deal of emphasis on the personality of the priest and on participation of the laity. I am led to question whether the liturgical form of the Mass itself, around these particular issues, is a major contributor to the severe drop in local vocations and the drop in attendance that we have seen in recent decades. I question whether taking the spotlight off the priest's personality during the Mass would see a rise in vocations. I question whether reducing the requirement to participate "exteriorly" would see people less reluctant to attend Mass. I now mainly attend Mass with my elderly mother with the Polish community. I don't speak Polish at all so use my English Missal to comprehend the Mass. An uncomfortable reality is that it can also be extremely difficult to understand priests from Asia or Africa that perform the English language form of the Mass in Australia. We need the English translation of Readings to aid comprehension of an English Mass. I have been observing these things and have begun to question the role that language plays in our current problems. In a multi-cultural Australia we have the reality of a Church divided, as much as united, by language. We have families who do not attend Mass together because they are separated by generational language differences. I am very interested in the role that language plays to unite and divide people. I understand that the Mass was once in a single language and that was changed to aid comprehension and unity in separate nations. I am currently questioning the effectiveness of this change.

We attend Lights of the Nations at Bowral run by the Missionaries of God's Love , at Easter, It is a wonderful experience which brings people together a lot of young people under 30 attend, the Church should get a handle on what they do and copy it.

My faith was imparted by the teaching nuns at my primary school, and for that I am eternally grateful. Of course it has to be found again and owned as an adult, or faith can remain immature. My own adult conversion came about through the Catholic Charismatic Movement, which gave strength, reality and purpose to my walk. Much water under the bridge since then, but never a wavering of faith, only a growth in love, trust, and wanting to help others.

I worked for 19 years for the Catholic Church in administrative leadership roles directly with two bishops. I worked across the welfare, diocesan finance, parish finance, education and banking. I was involved in national Church organisations. I have served on parish finance committees for

over 15 years, was parish coordinator of RCIA for 5 years and a support role for many more. I am in a faith community without a priest and have been appointed as one of its two leaders with my wife. I have participated in a support group for the personal development of a seminarian and confirmation as suitable candidate for priesthood. Over my working life in the Church and my faith life I have been in contact at a personal level with many seminarians, assistant priests, parish priests, retired priests and former priests and some bishops. My relationships with clergy have ranged from very close friends to a victim of clergy authority abuse, clericalism. I have had the joy to witness the highs of what the Church has to offer as a pathway to God and the sadness of witnessing first hand the abuse that some members of the Church, including bishops, have inflicted upon those, both clerical and lay, under their control. My 93-year-old mother revealed to our family recently that she was a victim of sexual abuse by her parish priest as a young child. She has walked past his grave set adjacent to the front door of her Church for the last 60 years as she has attended Mass. I provide this detail to emphasise that the current sexual abuse in the Church is not a recent thing, it has been covered up by clergy for centuries. My biggest surprise in respect to my service in the Church is when people find that I worked so long in the Church at such a senior level and still have my faith. I understand where they are coming from but my faith is not and has never been mortal centred.

I have been a committed cradle Catholic. The abuse crisis, 'lifeless' liturgies, clerical control and lack of ministry diversification and clerical acceptance of same has now put, me in state where I am currently extremely disillusioned with the Church. The final straw for me came from the severe disappointment I feel in my new parish. The local parish priest's pre Vatican II agenda saps my spirituality. It is deeply grieving to me that I now feel disenfranchised from the Mass going community.

I don't have a story about my experience of faith in Australia to tell, however, I am grateful for my schooling in a faith based environment. This has instilled many a values that has shaped me and I think perhaps this is where the Church in Australia may need to focus on to bring about positive change in this modern society.

I entered the SCAE (Sunday Celebration in Anticipation of Eucharist) without fully comprehending what it was about. The journey of learning, particularly with fellow parishioners was a spiritual reawakening for me. We regularly have SCAE at my Mass Centre and the consensus of those attending is how powerful it is, we are there to support each other in our Liturgy, for the Leaders, they have a much greater awareness of scripture and the importance of conveying this through the Reflection. In turn, the support of all present as we the people gather in prayer is evidence of the power of Christ in our lives. We are enriched and nourished by it.

My daughter attended a Catholic High School and started "acting out" and refusing to go to school. The school only saw the attitude and not the problem. My daughter was given afternoon detention on an almost weekly basis. In the end, we decided to enrol her into the local government school as it was closer to home. What we found however, the local high school had a great support system with counsellors available to students and a weekly catch-up/chat with the deputy principle to check if any adjustments were needed to make school and studies easier. The

individual support given to students at our Catholic schools is falling short and needs to be addressed.

I am a child of a "mixed" marriage, Mum the Catholic and Dad a Congregationalist (now part of the Uniting Church). Both were fine Christian people and weekly Church attendees and encouraged us as altar servers etc. There was never bigotry or animosity between them, nor arguments about religion. We attended Catholic schools. Both supported us five children and were voluntarily involved in our school endeavours. Through their generosity and service to others, I learnt of God's love and meaning in our life. At 13 years old, I left home to join the Brothers to the joy and support of both parents. They were just as supportive when I decided that it was no longer the vocation for me. I owe my faith to the example of my parents, my Catholic education, the Brothers who taught me and whom I wished to emulate and the time I spent with them. I taught in Catholic schools for over 40 years, and while there are still many great peoples and leaders in our schools, the changes in education in Australia and in society has impacted on our students. They no longer have the contact and example with Religious that I had and which was so beneficial to me.

Through my own efforts, I have sought to attend courses that help me to develop my faith. My parish does not give full priority to adult faith education. All it takes is encouragement by the parish community and the priest for this to change. Lay organisations no longer have priests walking the Christian journey with them. If only they could realise that we too have a vocation to live up to. We seek ways to witness to Christ and share the love of God in an authentic way. The complexity of this requires support from the clergy if we are to operate as Church together.

Regular attendance by teachers within their local parishes has identified that long term parishioners and priests do not welcome newcomers into the community. Even regular visits to church have not changed this. One member has attended regularly and others still do not introduce themselves. The older generation are not willing to accept change and this is evident in their behaviours and attitude to younger generations (children attending) at weekend Mass. The experiences of Mass are still the same as they were many years ago and have not been adapted to those attending (some younger generations) and need to be more relevant for the 21st Century.

Marriage Encounter helped my husband and myself to take a different look at our lives, and motivated us to work harder at life's challenges with the knowledge that Jesus loved us. My experience of Church which was St [-]'s [-], and Good Samaritans for teachers they were wonderful caring people, good men for priests.

As a successful professional who became a wife and mother living far away from family and friends, I struggled with a sense of failure in not having the skills and knowledge to do my new job as well as I had done my paid one. I was ashamed that I was depressed and not finding satisfaction and contentment. I felt trapped and needing to look as though I was coping. Although I was a regular Mass-goer and went to various community support groups and local spiritual activities they didn't give me what I needed. It was only when I found a Church group where I was given the impetus and means to grow my prayer-life and deepen my relationship with Jesus that things began to turn around. The other aspect of their formation was one-to-one mentoring (both from a priest in Reconciliation and from a lay-person) where I could pour out my heart and feel

that someone cared and understood. I was heard without judgement and given the opportunity to come up with practical solutions that fitted me and met the needs of my family as well. This allowed me to find purpose and peace and helped me share what I learned for myself with my husband, children and friends. It is this experience that showed me that to evangelise and re-evangelise successfully we need to firstly see each person as God sees and loves him/her, and then look after the whole person (body and soul) in an integrated and practical way that has meaning for her/him. And to share someone's journey (to happiness on earth and forever) we need to be on our own journey (not the identical journey, as we are all unique) but with the same goal and destination. I still receive ongoing formation from Opus Dei and it continues to support me to live the many challenges that I face with joy and peace.

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

What has shaped my faith, I believe, is generational prayer from my parents and their parents. I also was steered correctly by Church Militant and Michael Voris. I watch Catholic YouTubers a lot which has assisted in my formation—Ascension Press, Dr Taylor Marshall, Tim Gordon, Fr Don Calloway, to name a few. I am originally from Ireland and arrived in Australia in 1996. I stopped going to Mass for a couple of years in my 20's. Everything went badly wrong. I came back to the Church with my tail between my legs. I felt I was going to hell if I didn't. When I came to Australia, the local Church told me to drop the Catholic guilt, which I did. But I realised after many years that I should have been striving harder for holiness and that I should have been conscious of my sins. But that was not what Australia taught me. It taught me to relax about my faith. That teaching was wrong. I worked for the Catholic Church for 9 years in Australia and I learned more about my faith by leaving that job. The reason I left was because the priest was a bully. He made me miserable. I had no money when I left the job so had to take my kids out of Catholic School. The school made me feel so bad that I couldn't pay them even though I gave them records of my finances to prove it was too difficult. I contacted the bishop and had a meeting but to no avail. I also called the Catholic schools office for assistance but no one was willing to help. Now my kids go to state school which breaks my heart. But the Catholic School was not only unreasonable about payments but the Catholicism at the school was not taught well, so there were multiple reasons why I could no longer send my kids there. The main reason I sent them there was for Catholicism but it seems they really only wanted to attract those who preferred the private school. Catholicism seems irrelevant. They admittedly mentioned that they are pandering now to a school population who have absolutely no faith. The students' grandparents were the last people to have any faith. Regardless of the fact that I lost my job, I am grateful now because it led me to a path where my faith grew in company with other traditional Catholics. What is interesting is that my sisters in Ireland and US all hold the same strong faith, so being miles from each other did not affect our spiritual growth, hence why I believe generational prayer was instrumental in providing me with a strong faith.

It broke my trust. The person who baptised me, who did my first communion, my First Eucharist. He went to prison for covering up child abuse. He was reported to have sexually abused children.

The Vatican, huge and golden broke my grandmother's trust. Saw the golden handles, saw the opulent wealth and she has barely been to Church since.

I was visiting my 100-year-old mother yesterday who is in a nursing home. While there, two very pleasant ladies from St V de Paul popped into her room for a chat. I couldn't help thinking that despite the terrible press there is great unseen goodness in the Church.

A story about my experience of faith that has shaped me: I am writing as a Catholic priest who was a member of the [-] group that met on 17 November 2018 and has submitted the thoughts and questions in this particular submission to the Plenary Council website. Without any doubt I have been very much shaped by the experiences I have had in groups of people, such as that [-] group, groups made up of a variety of faith positions including those with no religious faith. I have found the sharing in such groups to be life giving, and I have come to realise that the wisdom and the love that is present in such groups can be found in all kinds of groups and in all kinds of situations. I went from the Seminary into a Science Faculty in a University, and I realised that seven years of Seminary formation had not really prepared me for that experience. It was an experience that led me to realise the importance of questioning things and that there are many ways of looking at life. My father was a person who lived a dedicated and generous life and he was always open to new ways of running his business. The experience of watching him and learning from him was life changing for me. I have also been privileged to learn from friendships, including those with women and with young people. So, the experience of faith found in groups of people with different views on life, in being part of a Science Course, and in being brought up with a searching father, and in being part of close friendships, has influenced the way I look at life and at the Church. I hope that the Church will be more open to the wisdom and the love of others who look at life in such a variety of ways.

I am the sixth child of twelve children, whose parents had this number of children because of their Catholic faith and beliefs and because of the 'populate or perish' slogan of the 1950s when there existed within the wider community a fear of communism coming into Australia from the North. The impact on my mother and subsequently on all of her children, in giving birth to so many children, and then the toll in bringing them up cannot be underestimated. I believe she did not experience any joy from taking on board her duty as a Catholic wife and mother. This duty or task laid heavily on each member of the family and there was a degree of guilt felt for having been born, almost a burden that you are somehow created. While I think it gave my mum a sense of belonging and an identity, at least to the outside world, the secret world of family life was not so wonderful. The impact on each of the children remains with some experiencing some significant mental health issues, many because their needs as individuals were not met. The Church's teaching on birth control and sex within marriage has had a major impact on the lives of many families and this is just but one story of hurt, harm and unhappiness. However, the twelve of us are all still alive and meet up when we are able. We do belong to each other and understand the reality of our background and upbringing. We are amazingly strong and resilient. I have no doubt God journeys with each of us and holds us lovingly, but that has been a lifelong process of faith, growth and understanding. Probably about half of us practice our faith and of the 40 grandchildren born to my mum and dad there are very few who connect with a worshipping community even though almost all of them were baptised in the Catholic Church.

Strangely enough, my earliest days of being a Catholic are at school where I was treated very badly by the nuns in the schools I attended. Constantly physically abused. I don't hold it against them as I don't think they knew any better. In fact, I spent the next 40 years teaching in Catholic schools hoping to make a difference. My husband and I are still practising Catholics although none of our family is but they are good and generous and loving people. I don't really enjoy the Mass any more as it is so dull. The Music and homilies are irrelevant to my life. I have joined many teams within the Church and still participate in various ministries but something is missing. My faith is probably stronger than ever and I separate my faith from religion. My husband and I both suffer the Catholic guilt complex with missing Mass that none of our family does. I find that a sad indictment of a poor Catholic upbringing—taught through fear and superstition. My mother was devout as were my husband's parents. Fortunately our children are free thinkers—free of the superstitions that formed us. They may not attend Mass but they have raised their children to be good and thoughtful people also caring for others and our earth.

I was bought up with the old green Catholic catechism, and the prayers of indulgence....it could be today's version of frequent flyer points to get to heaven! Through my own readings of the gospels and commentaries, plus numerous spiritual books, I have renewed my faith and believe more than ever in gospel's message of hope and heaven. Too many times I've heard from the pulpit, negativity; we're never good enough! And, I don't believe in Purgatory! Jesus told the good thief, "I promise you that today you will be in Paradise with me". (Luke 23, v 43). I can well understand why family, friends and others no longer go to Church. They can't belong to a Church which creates burdens and stifles the human spirit. Certainly, I am not for a 'Laissez-faire' approach within the Church. However, bring back kindness to the people.

For much of my life I have been a "Sunday Catholic" with only a superficial knowledge of my Faith gained at school. What has been of huge significance in my Faith journey has been the opportunity for adult formation in both my parish and the diocese and I look forward to continuing this process. These experiences have given me the knowledge and confidence to participate in a number of ministries and have certainly affirmed my Faith. I cannot stress how important I feel adult formation is for all individuals.

My journey started when as a small child I attended Mass with my parents and grandfather. Having relations who were nuns was also an influence. Religion lessons at school were learning by rote from a blue Catechism in Infants, then the green one in Primary, plus a book of essential, abbreviated Bible stories, some Church History. It certainly gave me the basics, and a fear of hell. I was very aware of the real presence of Jesus as I was prepared for my First Communion. Through childhood I experienced what time when I considered my Catholic faith to be a burden and obstacle, luckily this was balanced by the Redemptorist Missions every 2-3 years. I was at one of these Missions when I was in my late 20's that my faith actually started to gradually grow. Later, I had the opportunity to attend an Introduction to the Bible Course, later courses on the Sacraments, Church. I have continued to attend such things. As well as Lent and Advent group sessions. In spite of enriching my knowledge, I realise that true faith in the 'Risen Lord' will be 'work in progress for as long as I live.

Environmental issues were important to our group...share fairly the world's resources ... promote equality ... limit over-consumption ... preserve the world's natural resources for future generations

... make some sacrifices so others in poorer countries can live ... take risks, be active in social discourse and speak up for what is right ... make greater efforts to CARE for our environment .. seriously face the challenges of climate change ... take risks, be active in social discourse and speak up for what is right.

Clericalism is alive and well in the Church in general not just the clergy we have all being responsible at some time of Catholic bullying-clericalism as it is easy!

My story as was the persons in the group one of journeying with others and ourselves in the midst of hurt, disappointment, rejection at times, lack of ongoing formation in the faith and clinging to the knowledge that Jesus is Lord despite the apparent lack of the Body of Christ to demonstrate this.

One of our groups has a gay brother who stopped going to his local Church community as he felt unwelcomed by the wider Church. He wanted to be an active practising Catholic who could receive communion but felt outcast under the existing Church rules. It also put a great strain on his relationship with his practising sister as she was in terrible conflict between her love for her brother and her loyalty to obeying the Church rules!! This conflict also extended to their wider family. In the end he stayed away from Church as a way of minimising the family conflict. The sister is realising that Jesus always loved and never judged the marginalised people he came into contact with and that people must always be put ahead of rules in a truly merciful Church. Surely, as a Church, we must be doing the same and welcoming the brother fully into our Church community. We had a baptism during Mass a couple of years ago. The baby was a grandchild of a long time Church family. The father had not been to Church for many years but was happy for the baby to be baptised in accordance with the mother's request. The family and Godparents were seated in the front row waiting for the Baptism to begin. When Father came out, the first thing he did, rather than greet the family, was to ask the father of the baby to uncross his legs!!! We were all stunned!! The entire family and members of the congregation who heard it were embarrassed and the father hasn't been back to Church since. Another of the endless stories of the misused power of Clericalism and the damage it can do. Crossing his legs!!!! We all do it every time we are at Mass!!

A cradle Catholic with many faults, doubts and questions along the journey, I have been blessed to be a seeker of truth and have encountered many voices of sanity within the Church which have led me to remain faithful. Where would I go? Having been introduced to meditation by our parish priest some years ago I now understand unless the Church embraces this old tradition we have little future as the Church Jesus proposed.

A weird- looking man was sitting on my front fence, looking very dishevelled and scaring me. I went to speak to him and over 30 minutes I heard his tale of woe. He had mental health issues and my whole attitude changed. I was involved in an Ecumenical Outreach in another area. It developed into a soup kitchen and provided meals for the homeless and needy. My work with St Vincent de Paul has really opened my eyes to the needs of the poorest in our community. It is a privilege to hear the stories of our clients and be able to alleviate their situation somewhat. I was grateful to be involved in a parish fundraiser that eventually helped to feed those who struggled to live on Newstart.

My experience of Church is one of overwhelming fear—fear of not confessing everything, fear in sexual relations even after marriage, fear of "stealing" from the taxation dept. and social security, fear of eating too much on fast days—fear and more fear. The hierarchy of the Church doesn't care how their moral judgements affect the lives of every Catholic family and every Catholic individual in the world. The Church knows nothing about treating people with the compassion of Jesus, only preaching about it. Many of the general population in Australia believe in the goodness of Jesus, but don't see it in the institution of Christianity.

CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The table below is the full list of individual respondents' countries of birth from the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	178
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	13
Netherlands	3
India	2
United States of America	2
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	1
Ireland	1
Italy	1
Kenya	1
Madagascar	1
New Zealand	1
Nigeria	1
Philippines	1
Singapore	1
Slovenia	1
South Africa	1
Tonga	1
Not stated	32
Total	242

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
San Clemente High School	95
Staff of St Joseph's High School, Aberdeen, NSW	75
St Catherine's Singleton.	60
St Michael's parish	60
Franciscan Fraternity of St. Francis and St. Clare, Lake Macquarie	43
Parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary Taree, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Wingham, and their related Mass centres	21
Charlestown Wednesday ladies	16
St Joseph's Parish Community East Maitland	16
St Joseph Parish, Toronto	13
Taree Parish	13
Mrs	13
Parish Group	12
Cardiff parishioners	12
Diocesan Association of Pastoral Ministers	12
Parish Group	11
St Francis Xavier's College student leaders	11
Belcher family	11
St. Columban's Primary School	10
St. Joseph's Toronto	10
Holy Name Primary School parents	10
Forster / Tuncurry Parish	9
SJV Gospel sharing group	9
Parish Evangelisation Cell	8
House of Hospitality	8
Members of staff of St Therese School New Lambton	8
Ladies Group	8
Ladies Group	8
Student Leaders	8
Yr 6 group, Holy Name Primary School, Forster	8
St Joeys teachers	8
Friends	8
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Council for Young People	8
Bible study	8

Name of group	Group size
Prayer group Wallsend /Shortland Parish	8
St Kevin's Primary School	7
St Joseph's parish	7
Yr 6 group, Holy Name Primary School, Forster	7
Yr 6 group, Holy Name Primary School, Forster	7
Yr 6 group, Holy Name Primary School	7
Shalom prayer group Morisset	7
Immaculate Heart of Mary	7
Catholic parishioners in Chisholm region	7
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Staff	7
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry - Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle	7
City Region Social Justice Group	7
Faith Development group	7
Wallsend Shortland Parish	7
St Paul's Primary School Gateshead	6
St Joseph's Murrurundi NSW	6
Beresfield Parish	6
Holy Spirit Largs	6
St Philips Church Blackbut South	6
Gathering of Upper Hunter region	6
Parish Cells of Evangelisation	6
Parish Council Scone	6
Prayer group that is forty years old.	6
Belcher grandchildren	6
St. Anne's Parish Merriwa 2329	6
Some Merriwa Parishioners	6
St. Joseph's Toronto	6
Yr 6 group, Holy Name Primary School, Forster	6
Parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary Taree, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Wingham, and their related Mass centres	6
Eremos	6
Parish Group	6
Parish Group	6
St Mary's School	6
Wallsend Shortland small group	6
Holy Name Catholic Church	6
Holy Name Parish first parish group session	5
Holy Name Parish, Forster NSW	5
Parishioners of Maitland parish	5

Name of group	Group size
Group within Forster Catholic Parish	5
Largs Parish	5
Christian Meditation Group, Hallidays Point	5
Maitland/Newcastle Student Leaders 2019	5
HNS staff	5
Parishioners of Scone Parish	5
HNS staff	5
St Francis Xavier's College 2	5
East Maitland Parish	5
St Catherine's Catholic College	5
St Catherine's Catholic College staff group	5
St Catherine's Catholic College Singleton	5
Taree Catholic Parish	5
Catholic Parish Group	5
Holy Name School Parent group 2	5
Parish Group	5
Catholic Schools Office	4
REC - Maitland-Newcastle	4
St Joseph's Primary School	4
Forster / Tuncurry Parish Church parishioners	4
Forster / Tuncurry Parish No. 4	4
Parish of Forster/Tuncurry	4
St Columba's Adamstown	4
Old Bar Our Lady of Fatima Group	4
Taste and See Adult Faith Group	4
Our Lady of Fatima Church Old Bar NSW	4
Holy Name PS P&F	4
St Francis Xavier's College 1	4
St Mary's Scone	4
St Francis Xavier's College 3	4
St Catherine's College Singleton	4
St Catherine's Catholic College	4
Thornton Church of Christ Women's Ministry	4
St Bernard of Clairvaux	4
Taree/Wingham Parish	4
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle - Councils	4
St Joseph's Primary School	4
Our Lady of Fatima, Old Bar. NSW	4

Name of group	Group size
Forster / Tuncurry Parish	3
Parishioners Forster Tuncurry Parish	3
Holy Name Parish, Forster/Tuncurry, NSW	3
All Saints College	3
Sacred Heart Campbells Hill	3
Taree/Old Bar Parish	3
Taree/Old Bar Parish	3
Taree/Old Bar Parish	3
Council of Australian Catholic Women	3
Parishioners of Holy Trinity Blackbutt North	3
Forster-Tuncurry Parish	3
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Staff	2
St Joseph's Primary School	2
John Mak - Fiona Hooper	2
Coltheart Married Couple	2
Men's Discussion Group	Not Stated
St Michael's Parish Nelson Bay	Not Stated

This page is intentionally left blank



National Centre for Pastoral Research
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
GPO Box 368
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

