

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

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

***A Report to the Diocese of Parramatta***

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## About this Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

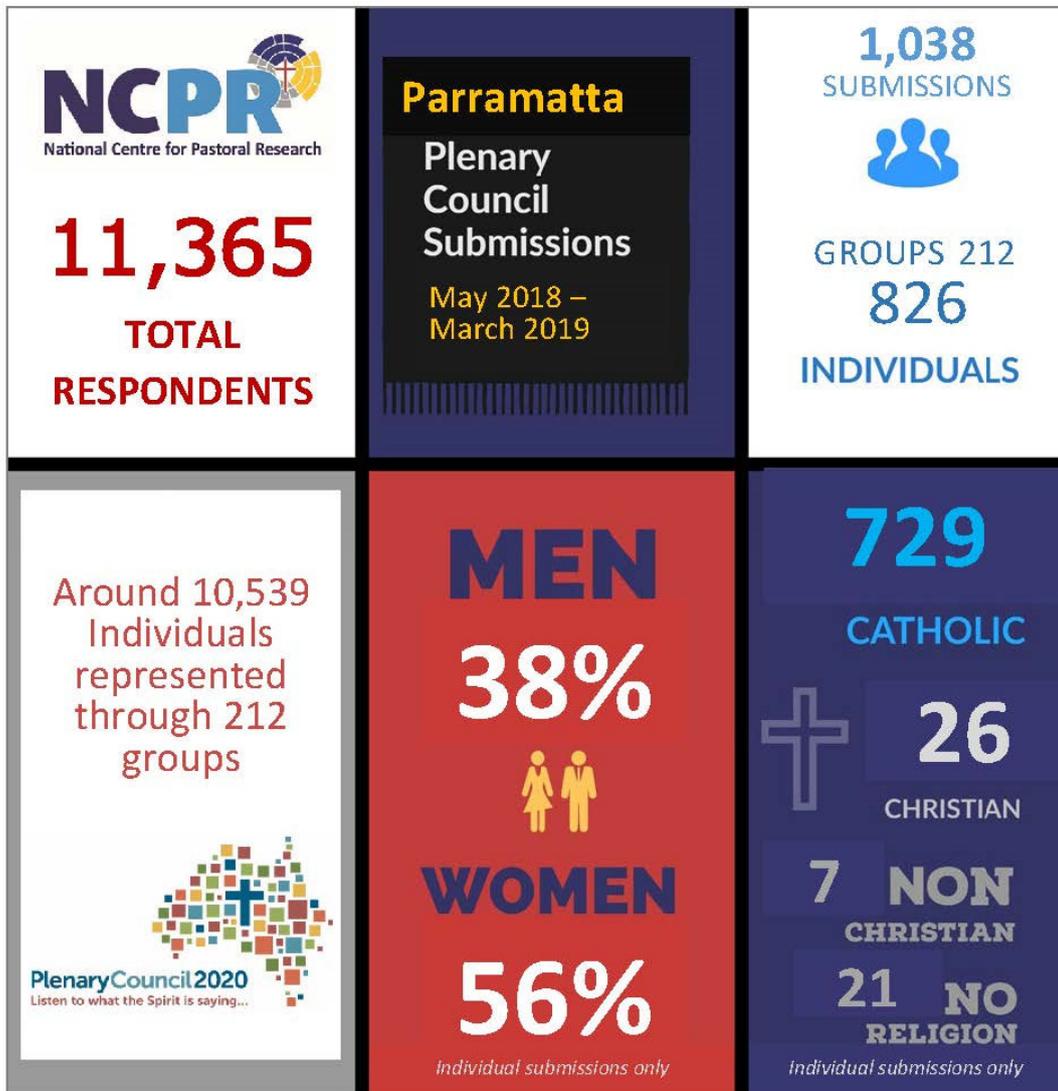
Along with the list of themes, we have also included in this report the submissions of participants who consented to have their submission made public as well as released to their diocese. These submissions (made in response to Question 1: *What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?*)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

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

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

Trudy Dantis    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 - Parramatta

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 Parramatta, we received a total of 1,038 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 543 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 89 were unsure if they had. About 405 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 1,038 submissions, 212 submissions were from groups or organisations and 826 submissions were from individuals. There were 10,539 people represented through the 212 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 11,365.

| <b>Table 1: Number of Submissions</b>                             |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>Total number of submissions received</b>                       | <b>1,038</b> |
| <b><i>Participated in Listening &amp; Dialogue Encounter?</i></b> |              |
| Yes   | 543          |
| No  | 405          |
| Not sure  | 89           |
| Not stated  | 1            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,038</b> |
| Submissions received from groups or organisations                 | 212          |
| Submissions received from individuals                             | 826          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,038</b> |

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 826 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 Parramatta. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 49 per cent (402) were received from those aged 50 and over. The most number of submissions within this age range were received from the 65-69 years age group (79 responses).

At the close of submissions, there were 125 individual submissions received from those aged under 25.

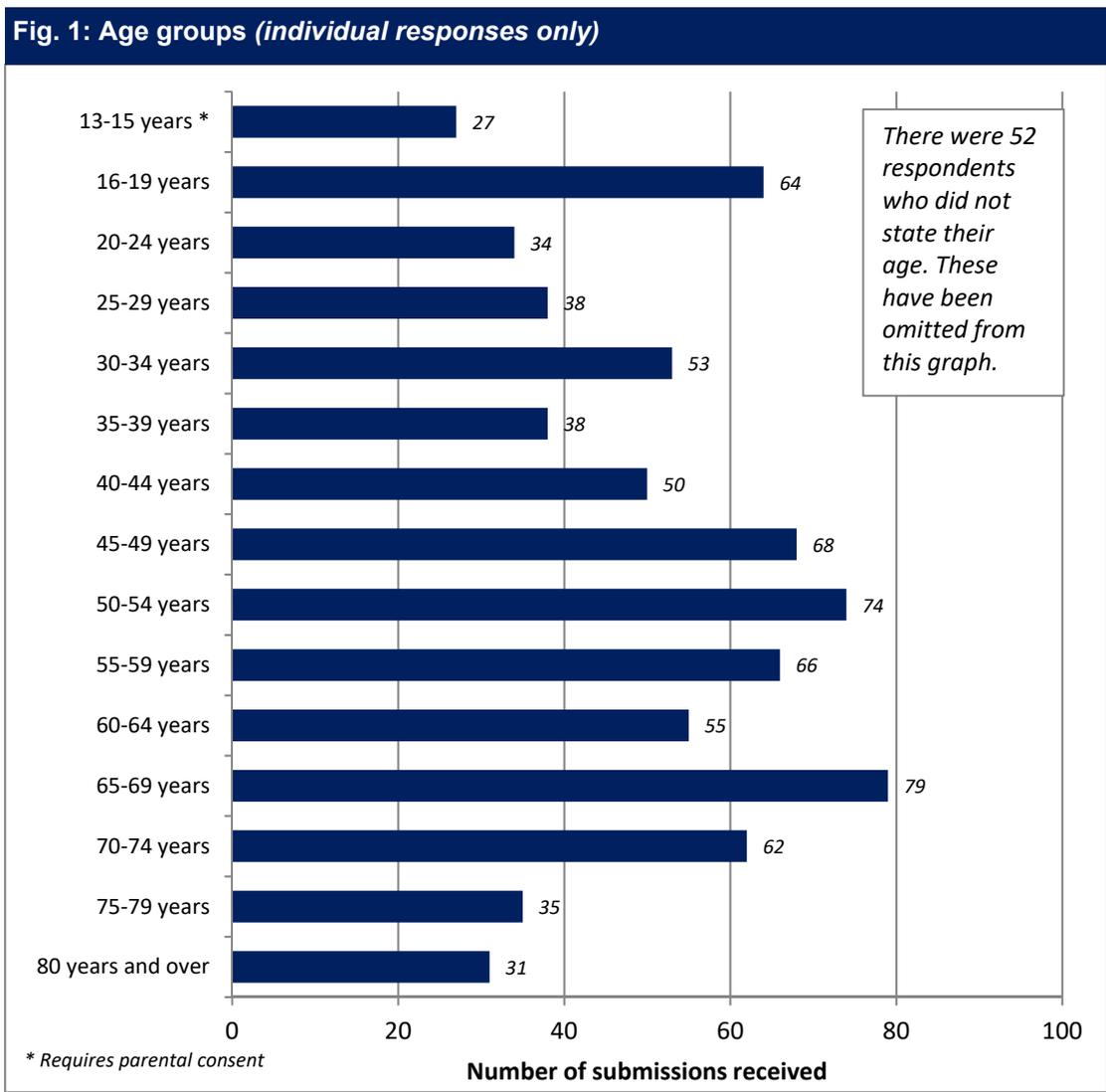
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were 64 individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

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

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

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| 13-15 years *     | 27         |
| 16-19 years       | 64         |
| 20-24 years       | 34         |
| 25-29 years       | 38         |
| 30-34 years       | 53         |
| 35-39 years       | 38         |
| 40-44 years       | 50         |
| 45-49 years       | 68         |
| 50-54 years       | 74         |
| 55-59 years       | 66         |
| 60-64 years       | 55         |
| 65-69 years       | 79         |
| 70-74 years       | 62         |
| 75-79 years       | 35         |
| 80 years and over | 31         |
| Not stated        | 52         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>826</b> |

\* Requires parental consent



## Sex of Respondents

A little over half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (56%), while a further 38 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 311 men and 459 women who made submissions. Nineteen respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 37 respondents did not answer this question.

| <b>Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)</b> |            |
|---|------------|
| Female  | 459        |
| Male  | 311        |
| Prefer not to say                               | 19         |
| Not stated                                      | 37         |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>826</b> |

## Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (63%) were born in Australia. Just over 28 per cent came from other countries, while around nine per cent did not state their birthplace. See *Appendix 1* for the full list of countries of birth. Table 4b provides a summary of the countries of birth by English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries\*, while Tables 4c and 4d indicate the countries of birth of the respondent's mother and father respectively.

| <b>Table 4a: Countries of birth<br/>(individual responses only)</b> |            |              |
|---|------------|--------------|
|   | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Australia   | 522        | 63.2         |
| India   | 17         | 2.1          |
| Lebanon   | 15         | 1.8          |
| Malta   | 14         | 1.7          |
| New Zealand   | 10         | 1.2          |
| Philippines   | 65         | 7.9          |
| Sri Lanka   | 19         | 2.3          |
| Sudan   | 6          | 0.7          |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland                | 16         | 1.9          |
| Other Countries   | 71         | 8.6          |
| Not stated  | 71         | 8.6          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>826</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

| <b>Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary<br/>(individual responses only)</b> |            |              |
|---|------------|--------------|
|   | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Australia   | 522        | 63.2         |
| Other English-speaking country  | 37         | 4.5          |
| Non-English-speaking country  | 196        | 23.7         |
| Not stated  | 71         | 8.6          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>826</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

| <b>Table 4c: Mother's country of birth<br/>(individual responses only)</b> |            |              |
|--|------------|--------------|
|  | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Australia  | 343        | 41.5         |
| Other English speaking country   | 47         | 5.7          |
| Non-English speaking country   | 329        | 39.8         |
| Not stated   | 107        | 13.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>826</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

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

| <b>Table 4d: Father's country of birth<br/>(individual responses only)</b> |            |              |
|--|------------|--------------|
|  | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Australia  | 332        | 40.2         |
| Other English-speaking country   | 53         | 6.4          |
| Non-English-speaking country   | 334        | 40.4         |
| Not stated   | 107        | 13.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>826</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

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

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Table 5 shows the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from your diocese who made submissions. At the close of submissions there were five individuals who identified themselves in this way, representing just under one per cent of all individual respondents.

| <b>Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander<br/>(individual responses only)</b> |            |
|--|------------|
| Yes  | 5          |
| No   | 764        |
| Not stated   | 57         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>826</b> |

## Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 826 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 729 respondents (88%) were Catholic. Twenty-six respondents were from other Christian denominations while there were seven from non-Christian religions. A further 43 respondents did not state their religion and 21 respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

| <b>Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)</b> | <b>Person</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Catholic   | 729           | 88.3           |
| <b>Other Christian:</b>                              |               |                |
| Anglican   | 9             | 1.1            |
| Baptist  | 2             | 0.2            |
| Orthodox   | 7             | 0.8            |
| Pentecostal  | 1             | 0.1            |
| Uniting Church                                       | 3             | 0.4            |
| Other Christian                                      | 4             | 0.5            |
| <b>Non Christian:</b>                                |               |                |
| Islam  | 1             | 0.1            |
| Judaism  | 1             | 0.1            |
| Sikhism  | 1             | 0.1            |
| Other religion                                       | 4             | 0.5            |
| No religion  | 21            | 2.5            |
| Not stated   | 43            | 5.2            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>826</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

For those who indicated that they were Catholic, a further question asked them to describe their participation in church activities. Their responses are shown in Table 7. A total of 592 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 76 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while 31 respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 30 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

| <b>Table 7: Religious description</b><br><i>(for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)</i> | <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Not stated</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--|---------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities                                      | 338           | 243         | 11                | 592          |
| I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes   | 49            | 22          | 5                 | 76           |
| I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything  | 9             | 4           | 1                 | 14           |
| I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith                      | 10            | 7           | 0                 | 17           |
| Other  | 11            | 12          | 1                 | 24           |
| Not stated   | 5             |             | 1                 | 6            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>422</b>    | <b>288</b>  | <b>19</b>         | <b>729</b>   |

## GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 212 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 10,539 individuals were represented through these groups. However, 16 groups did not report their number of participating members, indicating that the total number of people represented through the group submissions may be higher.

While 170 group submissions provided a group name, 42 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 Our Lady of the Angels Rouse Hill with around 5,000 members. There were also a number of other parish and community groups such as the Mary Queen of the Family Parish Blacktown with 1,600 participants and Bread of Life Fellowship with 350 members. There were seven other groups with 100 members or more.

| <b>Name of group</b>                                   | <b>Group size</b> |
|--|-------------------|
| Our Lady of the Angels Rouse Hill                      | 5,000             |
| Mary Queen of the Family Parish Blacktown              | 1,600             |
| Our Lady Queen of Peace Greystanes NSW                 | 352               |
| Bread of Life Fellowship                               | 350               |
| Campion College Alumni Association                     | 240               |
| Bonaventure Academy                                    | 191               |
| Alpha and Omega Bible/Prayer Group                     | 150               |
| Parish of St John 23rd - PPC                           | 150               |
| Lowana Study Centre                                    | 100               |
| Family of Divine Word                                  | 100               |
| Lourdes Young Adults Group                             | 90                |
| Community of the Risen Lord Sydney                     | 70                |
| Our Lady of the Way Parish, Emu Plains                 | 70                |
| STA Parish   | 60                |
| Parish of Baulkham Hills                               | 60                |
| St Monica's, Richmond Parish, NSW                      | 50                |
| St Monica's, Parish of Richmond, NSW                   | 50                |
| Neocatechumenal Community St Michael's, Baulkham Hills | 50                |
| 2 Vietnamese Communities                               | 42                |
| God's Love   | 40                |

## Age and Sex of Group Members

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

The Under 20 years age group was the largest group represented with 2,446 members. This was followed by the group aged 30-49 years with 2,244 members. There was no age provided for around 115 group members.

| <b>Table 9: Estimates of ages of people in group submissions</b>                |               |
|---|---------------|
| <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i> |               |
| Under 20 years  | 2,446         |
| 20 - 29 years   | 1,855         |
| 30 - 49 years   | 2,244         |
| 50 - 69 years   | 2,180         |
| 70 and over   | 1,419         |
| Unknown   | 115           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>10,259</b> |

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

Of the total 10,378 group members whose sex was reported, 52 per cent (5,442) were female and 48 per cent (4,936) were male.

| <b>Table 10: Estimates of sex of people in group submissions</b>                |               |
|---|---------------|
| <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i> |               |
| Female  | 5,442         |
| Male  | 4,936         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>10,378</b> |

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



**RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1**

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

## THEMES DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

- Love God, Love Neighbour
- Sacraments
- Social Justice and the Environment
- Leadership and Church Governance

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

- Love God, Love Neighbour (Chapter 4)
  - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching (p. 32)*
    - *Emphasis on Church teachings on marriage (p. 33)*
  - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God (p. 29)*
  - *Greater focus on Jesus Christ (p. 30)*
  - *Better faith formation (p. 38)*
  - *Renewed call to holiness (p. 35)*
  - *Greater focus on the Word of God (p. 31)*
  - *Care for neighbour (p. 36)*
- Sacraments (Chapter 6)
  - *Greater emphasis on prayer and sacraments (p. 64)*
    - *Emphasis on: Praying the Rosary (p. 65)*
  - *Holy Orders – Ending celibacy / allowing priests to marry (p. 66)*
  - *Holy Orders - Ordination of women (p. 69)*
- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
  - *Greater inclusion of all (p. 108)*
  - *Fighting for human rights issues (p. 110)*
  - *Care for the environment (p. 112)*
- Leadership and Church Governance (Chapter 7)
  - *Greater role for women (p. 83)*
  - *New model of Church, diocese, parish (p. 93)*
  - *Greater leadership from bishops (p. 87)*
  - *Greater leadership from priests (p. 88)*
  - *Ending clericalism (p. 80)*

- *More formation and support for priests (p. 89)*
- *Greater involvement of the laity (p. 84)*

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

- *Sharing the faith with others (p. 128)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p.151)*
- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse (p. 102)*
- *Eucharistic adoration (p. 51)*

## 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 25 per cent of all responses did not have consent for one or both of these criteria and therefore, their submissions have not been included here.

To attract youths and young adults. To have God's word (not human words) from the Bible proclaimed from churches ... To involve more music talent in schools and society in churches. To reduce priest's involvements in the administration of a parish so they may focus on studying and preparing wonderful homilies ... in churches ...

To be strong in our faith and restore the glory of the Church. This needs to be achieved through special attention being taken towards the quality of the celebration of the Eucharist in our churches, including music, reverence, architecture and education about the divine nature of the Eucharist.

To share the truth of Jesus Christ and his Church in a way to engage today's culture. I believe that our Church is true and Holy and our teachings are beautiful but just misunderstood. God is not asking of any of us to change the teachings of Jesus Christ. I do believe we need the Church in Australia needs to respond to all the misunderstanding out there about our Church and also our teachings on sexual ethics. God wants the Church to teach and show people the true beauty of marriage and sexual union as well as the true meaning of the body. It wants us to teach and demonstrate the feminine genius that all women have. Not by putting women into roles which men are called to—as that is the opposite of feminine genius. We don't want people to think we have to be the same as men to be equal. We want women in the Church to know their divine gifts given to them as women to serve the Church and community and family. I feel much More needs to be done in this area. I also believe God is asking the Church to support families and marriages—especially young families with young kids who are trying to raise Catholic families but need supports. Family is the cornerstone of society. We need good marriages and families and the Church needs to provide more support, mentorship and resources in this area. There has been a lot of attack against the Church because of the sexual abuse by some priests so we must provide support for our priests many of whom are amazing Holy men! In light of the vote about same sex marriage, there was lots of division in the Church and a lack of leadership from many bishops in this area. I believe God is asking for Strong and courageous leaders like Joshua and Moses to stand up for what Jesus Christ taught very clearly! We must not compromise our teachings just because it will make us seem loving

or more inclusive. True love wants the best for people. The best is the truth. The best is when people can live how God knows will make them truly happy and get them to heaven. Let us be very clear and show our culture AND our Church that we can love the sinner (which we all are) but hate the sin. We can be inclusive but still stand against certain acts (homosexual and heterosexual) while still not hating the person. We must show that we stand for marriage between a man and a woman and WHY. We CANNOT be grey in this area! It doesn't do any service to the youths or the Church. People just make a mockery of us and think we don't even agree on this basic issue of Jesus Christ. God is calling the Church in Australia to be courageous! To stop going along with the secular culture. To remember the truth. Teach the truth and for any priests or bishops' teaching against the truth to step down. God wants to see a Church which exalts love and marriage and family because in the proper understanding of this (Theology of the body) lies His message for the meaning of life and call to communion with Him!

1. Evangelism to non-believers. 2. Helping the poor and needy. 3. Promote unity of all different cultures. 4. Discipleship of believers.

To incorporate the role of women more fully in the Church by way of women deacons. To give the baptised a role in the governance of the Church on a par with the ordained by establishing diocesan and Deanery Pastoral Councils in every diocese as well as Parish Pastoral Councils. The Parish Pastoral Council to be involved in the appointment of the parish priest. The Deanery Pastoral Council to be involved in the appointment of the Dean and the Diocesan Pastoral Council to be involved in the appointment of the bishop.

I believe God is asking us as Catholics to: Not give up! Our world has changed around us and Australia has become an affluent country however there is still poverty and misery around the globe and in our country more. God is asking us to care and to pray more. He is asking us to pick up our crosses and follow him. Our Church needs to stop being so 'politically correct' and return to a religion of truth. People are fooling themselves and allowing sin to take hold of them through apathy and ignorance. Priests are too concerned with being liked that they water their sermons down and tolerate the shocking irreverence and immodesty that has crept into our Church. We are Catholics living in a secular society. That isn't easy but we need to be strong and Not Give Up or into this form of life that has infiltrated society. Our society is full of impurity and greed. So Plenary 2020 needs to pray hard that the Holy Spirit guides them in this renewal. Don't be too quick to throw away some conservative views of the old and the wise, for the trendy views of some Catholics whose beliefs are more Presbyterian or watered down Catholics at least. What was a mortal sin in the past is still a mortal sin. It is not alright to turn our churches into halls and theatres. How did irreverence become so much a part of our Catholic churches? One can't even pray in a Church chapel, in some churches, for the noise coming from the church. Some priests believe that it's good to lower standards so that the young/and new will feel welcomed. It is by lowering the standards of our Catholic Religion and Faith that, I believe, has led to the decline in many aspects of Faith and Holiness within our Church. God wants us to stand up to the falseness and untruths of the secular society and to be true witnesses like the Apostles and the early Christians. So I believe God is asking us to a return to FAITH. He is asking Australians to be strong against the temptations of the 21st Century and restore the Church to the institution it was where Love of God was strong and real, where reverence was the accepted gift we gave our creator and where true faith in prayer and the sacraments was strongly...

To pray more, repent more and return to him. We are challenged by an increasing secular society. Morals in Australia seem to be at an all-time low. Those Christians who still believe are being asked by the Holy Spirit to persevere and not give into the corruption around us. N.B.: Some of the corruption is even infiltrating the Plenary 2020 meetings with agendas clearly being hijacked by radical people who are essentially non-Catholic but Presbyterian as clearly seen by their lack of understanding of the Catholic Church, its history, the significance of the Mass and its structure etc. I feel the Holy Spirit is saying to me to be careful that the Plenary 2020 actually doesn't result in undermining the already shaky Catholic Church in Australia. Some say we need to work harder to

encourage the Catholic people who are not attending Mass to start attending as numbers are declining. However, Plenary 2020 needs to be careful not to turn away the people who are already still attending. Priests and Plenary 2020 Chair people etc. say they are here to listen through this process but clearly their agendas are being pushed; with strong opinions on Catholicism and the Mass, as expressed, less appreciated and even ignored or negated.

God is asking us to go out and proclaim Jesus as the Word became flesh. That He is God became man. He taught us how to live this life and through His Resurrection that there is a life after death. He gave us the Eucharist to help and strengthen us in this life, to grow to know and love Him, so that we can be with Him in the next. Nothing else matters. We seek a divine centre within from where we can go out and spread His love and serve others. This is a good start. See at the end of the submission.

#### 1. WHAT IS GOD ASKING OF US?

- That we grow to maturity through renewal. That we fully participate, not just as individuals but as community, in God's plan for the whole of creation. As we seek communion with God out of desire rather than duty or fear.
- That we experience the freedom to use our God-given gifts to bring truth, joy, healing, liberation and encouragement to the world. And acknowledge God's freedom to be present where God chooses, with abundant gifts and wisdom for the world.

I'd like to say first that I spent 5 years studying for the ministerial priesthood in the mid to late 60s. I believe God wants us to find meaning (food for the soul) in our faith rituals and for those who immediately think of mystery as somehow contrasting with that meaning I am reminded that mystery is not so much a head-scratching exercise as recognition of ENDLESS meaning. I want to focus on Eucharist. As a ritual, it has many meanings for Catholics, many of which, despite genuine attempts to broaden its original purpose, are seen as individualistic. (An irony for Catholic theology, as I remember from my seminary days, because the way we were often distinguished from, say, the Protestant tradition, was our emphasis on community). Despite the perfectly legitimate personal reasons for receiving Communion, it seems to me that an absolutely core meaning has rarely been experienced by Catholics because authorized liturgists insist on a more "abstract" approach because it is practical. I am referring to the earliest Christian communities who, as far as we know, did understand that the Eucharist was all about THE POOR. To the best of my knowledge, when Christians gathered for the Eucharist they brought with them blankets, clothing, wine, candles, bread and oil to be distributed to the poor for that week. These items were placed together and when the presider arrived he took some of the bread and wine from those donations and they became... Jesus! If this is historically accurate (and there were already some who came without donations for the poor) it is clear the Christians knew they were a community living the loving compassion that Jesus lived and that the Jewish people were gathered together to live when their compassionate God claimed them as his people. The practical need for hosts to be made on hot plates and sold to parishes is an obvious one. And it needs to continue, I believe. BUT, if once or twice a year, say on Holy Thursday and a chosen Sunday, the laity actually brought clothing and food and unleavened bread and red wine to give to those in need the pp could take some of that bread and wine and they could become Jesus! Then the penny would drop! "Is THAT what it's all about?". I heard a sad story from a friend recently: her Catholic 14 year old is keen on social justice (along with Catholic friends at school) but her and they just don't get the connection between caring for others and the Eucharist! What does that tell us? We need to give them the experience so they get it!! And not just the teenagers!

For CHRISTIANITY to be brought back into the CHURCH and the expulsion of ALL paedophiles and their protectors.

Keep the faith, educate those around us within the Church, we are no match for those that would harm our Church and limit our rights to be Catholic. Generally speaking, we are as a group, naive and therefore vulnerable. We make up around 25% of the population and we are dis-unified so have

little or no impact on politicians decisions. I don't have to write a lot of words, in summary. Educate in the teachings of the Church. Unify the behind our clergy, support them publicly. Be proud of Jesus and his Church publicly. Create an effective strategy that counters our tormentors, the press are the main issue, where they relish a good old fashioned "Catholic Bashing". Strengthen our laypersons' lobbying powers. Have a group in every parish assessing what needs to be done to renew from inside.

Australia is a multicultural nation and Catholicism's initial meaning is an all-encompassing belief. We have the capacity to expand and take into our midst many cultures and many people who now believe differently to us but who are searching for a deeper connection with themselves, other people and God. Because of our cultural diversity, we have the capacity to teach the people of different cultures to go back to their families, friends, work colleagues and take prayer, healing and consolation to them. We need to remain true to our Catholic traditions and values and bring a deeper value system to values that are now failing in our ever-changing world. Things like family values, discipline for our children, trust in better, exemplary behaviour of our ministers and Church etc. One way to do this is by example. We must become the example of what it means for a Christ like life. This means we are ever striving to transform our human failings individually, as a group and as a Church. We need to go to the people and urge them to look into their hearts. We need to offer them ways to enable them to have a good life, a better life but not by handouts but by teaching. We need to 'teach them to fish' for their needs on all levels—physically with aid to become independent to support themselves, emotionally with love and companionship, mentally with mindfulness and correct input for wholesome thinking, spiritually by opening their abilities for prayer, mediation and connection to God. If we can do this we will bring an essence of peace to our land and open up vistas for people to want to partake of that. A system that accommodates all of this will serve as an example for others in the world to follow and from that can be a growth over the whole planet to bring more peace, harmony and love.

I believe many Catholics become disengaged because they are not getting fed spiritually; they journey through life without directions from the Scriptures and eventually lose faith in the Church and or in God. The Church needs to hear teachings, principles, values that are based on the scriptures and live out the Christian life. We need to raise leaders, preachers, teachers, and communicators that can speak the authentic message of the Bible, and honour the name of Jesus. I believe good preaching is lacking in the Church today. Speaking the word of God should not be limited to priests and clergies, for many communication is not their strong point. I believe we should make room for the Holy Spirit to move in the Church by allowing gifted lay individuals, who live out Christian life, to preach and unpack God's message. Faith is received through hearing. We need to hear more, we need more creative way of sharing God's word.

I think this question is somewhat presumptuous. I do not believe we are able to know what God thinks, wants or asks. Perhaps a more educative and searching question may be: What is your image or understanding of God? This may help us to grow beyond the old Ptolemaic 3-tiered view of the universe with God above the sky, to the new cosmology of an expanding, evolutionary universe with God as the dynamic reality at the heart of it all. This contemporary theology has hardly been brought into our official Church theology or liturgy or spirituality. I suggest as another alternative: How do you think the Church in Australia can more authentically reflect the Gospel of Jesus?

Love one another as I have loved you. Be compassionate and considerate and try to reduce the negative influences of this material world. Real connections are made through human interactions, which are often stifled by material possessions. Material possessions can cause selfishness, greed and jealousy. Be thankful for ... Being well fed ... A roof over our head ... and a nice warm bed ... as long as you have the above and the necessary means to maintain them you should consider yourself well off. I think that God is asking us to trust in him and follow your inner conscience. I would like to share this appropriate prayer that I wrote... (uploaded at end) I have found it to be uplifting when I face trials in my life.

That laity can also lead some of the sacraments such as baptisms and marriages and funerals. Women deacons and a charity arm to each parish.

There are many lonely, unemployed, single, retired, people with a disability and others whom the parish is not reaching. They are lonely and bored. I believe every parish should have a drop in centre coffee shop run by volunteers. I work in such a place with the Uniting Church in Westmead and it is highly successful. I also believe there should be more fellowship and a cuppa after every Mass ... weekdays and Sundays. It can be simple ... instant coffee, tea bags and a dishwasher for the mugs to be hygienically cleaned. It's more than the cuppa, it's the communion. This could not only help the above categories, but also the depressed and suicidal. Thanks for reading this, Sr [ - ] RSM

To become more spiritual and less self-centred and not make money our god.

Evangelisation and outreach in our communities. Also opportunities for Catholics to encounter Jesus Christ in a personal way and develop an intimate relationship with him and our Church. This can be through partnership with active and vibrant Catholic communities such as Disciples of Jesus Covenant Community that reaches out to young people, forms them and fosters opportunities for encounter with Jesus Christ e.g. Summer School of Evangelisation and Light to the Nations Easter Pilgrimage. I believe God wants us to also be engaged with the issues of the day by works of mercy, hospitality and also re-educating ourselves with the treasures of our faith in the intellectual tradition but also knowing the scriptures and the wisdom of the saints. We need to recover a culture of prayer and faith formation in the family as well. We need an active and contemplative approach that engages all spheres of our faith and go out and evangelise as Christ commanded. We therefore have to be formed and on fire with love for Christ who we have encountered and are following in listening to his will.

What do we think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Two things we believe God is asking Catholics today: (1) Open Our Hearts and Minds and become One, (2) Open Our Eyes and create a universally accessible Church. What do we mean by "Become One" using an analogy of modern business; our parishes, charities and institutions have become "Silos". Our Church needs to make strides in eliminating the structure and behavioural barriers that prevent communication, collaboration and the opening of God's Word to a wider community. Within ten kilometres of our parish of [ - ] NSW are five other Catholic Churches, the sharing of God's Word and community priorities are lost in these "Silos". People even feel that they can't attend other parishes because each has its own 'culture', led by the different religious orders who lead them. Masses are at the same time, news is limited to these areas. Within this small area there are many Catholic NFP Charities, again they are 'Silos' with very little contact with the parishes or the wider Catholic community. Many in the parish communities do not even know that they exist. We are all one faith, but feel as though 'they' are no different to other Christian faiths. We are one Catholic Church but not a UNITED Church.

'Open Our Eyes' is about seeing the disabled who are excluded from our parishes, by inaccessible barriers. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures tell us that around 20% of Australia's people have some level of disability. A closer look indicates that the numbers are likely to be quite substantially larger. As well as the 20 per cent plus who have a disability, around eight per cent of the community act as carers for family or friends with disabilities on daily basis. We also know that all these numbers are growing and will grow further as our population ages. This is one reason why providing access for people with disabilities is about access for all and not only an issue of minority rights. Disability is in fact an inherent part of the diversity of human experience. Being part of a community is essential to leading a fuller life experience. Professor Elizabeth Hastings of the Human Rights Commission "A community which includes people with a disability is not some experiment of overbold social engineers; it is the real community we have now, waiting to be acknowledged. Accessibility is not an experiment we can or should defer, while we procrastinate over whether this or that is really the right time or the right way to try it". A small example within the [ - ] Diocese, attached emails and letters to show just one small response or no response as is the usual reaction

from our Church in Australia October 2017—"Think of a priest who does not welcome everyone. What advice would the Pope give him?" Pope Francis asked before responding. "Close the doors of the Church! Either everyone or no one" ...

Greater Churchgoers participation in the Mass by introducing overhead to show the prayers and page number references in the church books. Introducing magazines about the main current issues in Australia for the newcomers or people with new culture coming to Australia such domestic violence and child abuse please explain and highlight their legal consequences of them. In simple English. Catholic bus tours or trips or travel for the Catholic community and others wish to participate. Online local Church publications "bulletins" for those who miss on the weekly Mass. Online talking or chats with priests. Organised group travel by the local Catholic parishes through booking to organise travel and stay at interstate hotels. Like Easy Go Connect for pensioners. Please include the youths. Social support groups. Maybe women priests, time to be allowed to enter churches. Home visits allowed by priest on demand for counselling, pray and blessing. Allow the public to volunteers to assist with the church cleaning benches and watering grass and gardening and other activities. 24/7 Catholics help line or for others who would like to participate. Raffles and prizes after church Masses. Introduce overseas Exchange visits by priests. I want to know the Catholic main issues in Canada, USA, England and South Africa and other countries. Maybe other by other churches not of Catholic stream. Introduce and publicised donations by B-pay on line for Catholic organisations. Introduce group trips to tour the Vatican. "Stimulate interest to our Catholic values". Establishing Catholic nursing homes and hostels for temporary accommodation. Catholic home services to the aged people. At times we would like to go to church and pray but the church internally is cold. Temperatures should be warm to pray in comfort. The Church may be able to help in drugs, crimes and domestic violence through better education at schools. Maybe priests from America or England will help to educate and lecture us on how they do things better there as far as education at schools. We may compare notes.

1. To get more young people and young families into the Church. Engage, connect, communicate and BE RELEVANT to the youths. Use Technology, Apps and social media avenues to reach the youths who are not engaged with their parish communities. 2. To get Australia more united in the wider, global Church—Use Technology to connect with Pope Francis and unite with other Churches globally. Consider having a Video Homily direct from the Pope every 3-6 months to be screened in our parishes, to connect people with their Church leader and to give people the opportunity to listen to the Pope's message. Use technology to unite our parish communities across the world.

What do you think God Is asking of us In Australia at this time? If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn "realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith" Laudato Si' 64. God has written a precious book, "whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe" Laudato Si' 85. Thomas Berry sets the Book of Nature alongside the Book of Scripture and he leaves one in no doubt about which of the two is of greater relevance in today's world. THOMAS BERRY By Michael Colebrook [https://greenspirit.org.uk/resourcepack/?page\\_id=125](https://greenspirit.org.uk/resourcepack/?page_id=125). We have to read the book of nature and to hear Earth crying in pain through the suffering of people and all life. Theology needs to be interpreted with a clear view of the life of our common home, and in this light, "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God". (Micah 6:8). The following six subjects are determined through the words of Laudato Si'. COSMOLOGY—God is asking us to recognise the Divine Presence in all the universe, for every atom and molecule has come to be through the power and energy of God's Holy Spirit. ECOLOGY—God is asking us to study, learn and recognise the Divine Action in the delicate balance of relationships in all life and live in the belief that all of Earth and all its life is holy. SIMPLICITY—God is asking us to recognise the Divine Wisdom of a lifestyle in which we control our needs to allow a fair sharing of Earth's resources. CONSERVATION—God is asking us to listen and hear all creatures singing the Divine Praises in their diverse languages. And to join in this song by promoting and protecting the diversity of life. CONTEMPLATION—God is asking us to

express our love for the immanence and transcendence of God in Creation through silent reflection, prayer and liturgical action. INTEGRATION—God is asking us to study the interconnectedness of all life and recognise the relationships between each human action and its long-term effects.

I am looking for an inclusive Church. I am a consecrated virgin from the Diocese of [ - ]. I am one, the only one my Diocese and one of about 8 in the country. We are one of the smallest "groups" of consecrated life in Australia. In the prayers of intersession, in the Catholic media, in Diocesan publications and in the liturgy, we are always excluded. No one ever reports on our consecration in the national Catholic media. It is always about habit wearing nuns. No one ever prays for us because the narrative used is "Religious Life". Despite the Year of Consecrated Life, any reference to forms of consecrated life always comes under the banner of "Religious Life" which is a specific type of consecrated life. "Consecrated Life" includes all forms but no one ever uses it. As such I feel discriminated against and excluded. Anyone who says "Religious Life" or "religious life" includes other forms like consecrated life is offensive and patronising. All I want is an inclusive Church to use inclusive language "consecrated life". We would like more support by simply reporting on our vocation using local vocation stories. I was consecrated in August 2017. My Diocese did provide full media attention but Cathnews did not pick up the story yet it picks up CV stories from the US. Cathnews picks up every fresh face woman who puts on a long white habit but no story about the first CV or member of secular institute in the Diocese. It seems that there is an agenda against consecrated virginity, which is the oldest form of consecrated life in the world.

Not to abandon our Church but to be part of the change that is needed. I am a married woman, mother of four adult children and grandmother, a social worker, a marriage and family counsellor and a pastoral supervisor. I have tried to live my life according to the Gospel values and lessons from Jesus and the teachings of our faith. I attend Mass and the sacraments regularly and have been involved in various ministries in my parish and community since teenage years. I am a "rusted on" Catholic. I believe God is asking of us to rescue our "shrinking Church" here in Australia by taking some radical steps of reform. The scandal of child sexual abuse perpetrated by priests and religious has added to the disdain and mistrust that so many now have for the Catholic Church. Many reforms are needed, 1) More women everywhere. We should be enabled to be decision makers and leaders in the many areas of Catholic Church life. Allow women to enter study and formation for the Diaconate and be ordained as Deacons. Enable the many well-qualified and competent religious Sisters to positions of authority in the Chancery of Dioceses. Ensure women are invited to be part of every Board, Committee or Governance structure for anything Catholic—and not just the one token woman among the majority of men—clerical or otherwise. Listen to us women as we are half of the population and can do much in positions of authority to change the perception of our Catholic Church as a misogynistic, dictatorial and exclusive organisation. Allow the nurturing and generally good communication skills of women to be part of the messages that our Church wants the community to know about the "Good News". Enable the women to be real practitioners of this Good News through being prominent as voices for our Church and visible in pastoral care and on the altar—and not just to do the flowers and wash the linen!

For radical reform of our damaged Church. I believe that celibacy should be a discerned choice for those entering formation for priesthood and thus we should be able to enable married men to be ordained as priests. Marriage could provide the intimacy that we as human beings generally crave and will also possibly assist with the balanced perspective for a priest that comes from having the realities of compromise and communication and general family life to live within. It may assist to develop a psychosexual maturity and deeper understanding of sexual life—and of women! As in the world of other married people there will be problems in marriages and there may be separations and divorces. This is the reality of our world and priests need to live in the real world of the people they are providing pastoral care for. The other Christian Churches can make this work—so I don't see any valid reasons why this is deemed not possible in our Catholic Church. We already have married priests that have come across from the Anglican Church. How can our Church have one rule for some

and not for others? Some of the Orthodox Churches also have married priests and they have managed this for Centuries. We also have married deacons who are providing pastoral care and liturgical and sacramental assistance in many parishes. The model of the married Deaconate involves the vocation of the couple and the wives are instrumental in assisting their husbands to provide pastoral care in parish and other settings. I recommend that the Plenary Council consider continuing the journey of Ordination of these married Deacons to full priesthood.

To look upon ourselves as a country and help other countries that are less fortunate than us.

God, as always, is asking us to be the best Christians we can be. Live in the footsteps of Jesus, demonstrate compassion, empathy, understanding, love in everything we do. In this Australian society that is being confronted with issues and notions which were unthought of previously, God is asking us to remain grounded and stay true to the Catholic beliefs. Be real in our feelings to others, do not be obsessed and controlled by distractions. Place priorities on that of importance. Face these new challenges with complete compassion and without prejudice as Jesus would, as God would. Interpret these new challenges and consider others' perspectives fairly and equally. Be nice to the environment. We like our world. :)

From my own perspective and talent base, I would say God is asking Australia and the Church in particular to devote more resources to spiritual formation inside and outside the parish, and to make meaningful contact with the SBNR (Spiritual but not Religious) and "None" elements in our community and society. This squares with Pope Francis' call to go "beyond the frontier or periphery" and to make the first step to contact others that are non-Catholic and non-Christian, a call echoed in the archived sermons of our local bishop, Bishop [ - ].

God is asking us to return to traditional Catholic values and practice. Basically, a return to the ancient faith, as we practiced it for 2000 years. We have abandoned the things that "made us" Catholic—i.e. our culture and traditions. These things have been trashed and considered "old fashioned" and "worthless"—but they are not! They are a part of who we are (or were). Things like the Traditional Latin Mass, praying the Rosary, Corpus Christi processions, traditional prayers and hymns etc. God is asking us to reject the modernist heresy that has infected the Church and has led to the "emptying of the pews", "protestantising" of the liturgy, homosexual priests, divorce, sexual abuse, liturgical abuses, heretical "hymns" being sung in Church, the constant "chatter" that goes on in Church (before or after Mass) instead of the reverence that should be observed in front of the Blessed sacrament etc. Basically, we need a return to traditional practices and values that safeguarded the faithful for 1950 years until the rise of modernist heresies. God is asking for us to reform the clergy that currently lack the courage to teach the Church's dogmas around faith and morals.

God is asking us to look closely at the quality and content of Catholic education being provided in our Catholic Schools in Australia. At present, Catholic schools do very little to promote the true orthodox Catholic faith. Religious education has become a wishy-washy "social justice" education that is practically no different from what is taught in public schools. There is no firm and fearless defence of the Faith, no strong promotion of Catholic sexual ethics, no education of children in the basic tenets of the faith as elucidated in the ecumenical councils (most children end up with no idea what the Holy Trinity is or the two natures of Christ or an understanding of Mary as Mother of God), no understanding of the importance of attending Mass and the sacraments etc. I have regularly asked teachers at Catholic schools "how many of your school's children, after 13 years of Catholic education, go to Mass regularly by the end of their schooling?" The answer is usually "less than 10%". This represents a severe failure of Catholic schools and means that our children are no better off than had they attended state schools.

God is asking us to listen to himself, the Holy Spirit. This is a time of change and renewal. There are many challenges moving forward. This world is rapidly changing due to secularisation and other factors, but with this comes the great opportunity for the Church to be renewed. That is what God is asking us for. Renewal does not mean forgetting about our traditions or our history. I see God asking

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| <p>of us Aussies today what he asked of the Church at Vatican II, namely, to be better equipped to present the Gospel to our fellow humans and to better understand it ourselves.</p>   |
| <p>To remember our beliefs in all that we do and say—being compassionate, having empathy, considering others and sharing. Supporting the weak and the downtrodden. Helping people to help themselves. Not judging others—either inside or outside of our Faith.</p>   |
| <p>I think that God is asking us to look after each other and to treat others the way you want to be treated. I also think that God is asking us to be gracious and look after our community. There are times when our community needs us most and we need to be faithful and loyal to God, the Church and our families.</p>  |
| <p>*I see the need for greater civility, more listening, and hence less a culture of labelling and mental bullying. *An acceptance of our diversity by way of coming to experience each other's cultures and/or belief systems.</p>   |
| <p>To listen and be open to others ideas. To be open and accept change for our Church in our country for us today.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking Australia to be very, very true, honest and compassionate.</p>   |
| <p>God wants us to be happy. To make life easier on us and others. Stop judging ourselves and others. Our norms to measure success are taking us away from the real aim of our lives. We are here to serve. Serve our family as mother and father. Serve the elderly, the environment, animals' rights.... The Church should ask people to follow their passions. These passions will lead to their purpose. We should stop putting pressure on ourselves in education, finance and positions to be considered successful. Jesus was average at all three. Yet he is the king of the kings. According to our logic, Jesus wasn't successful and a loser. Jesus came to show us the way and gave us all answers. We listen to motivational speakers and we are impressed by their discoveries: The power of now, Be optimistic ... Sorry but Jesus said it a long time ago. I haven't heard any motivational words that were not told by Jesus in the Bible. People are lost and tired. The Church should start by letting everyone know that everything is going to be okay like Jesus said. Then the Church needs to work on marketing with Catholic motivated leaders to reach highest rating on YouTube, Twitter,... my kids watch videos made by inexperienced people that have more than 20 million views. How hard could it be to make some videos about Jesus that kids can relate to? Use figurines and tell the Bible. Do the same for other age groups. Market and spread Jesus' words in a new way that everyone can relate to. Videos, clips. Be like Oprah and be close by spreading the word of Jesus in most effective ways possible. Once people are reached the Church needs to make the Mass a ceremony that the whole family can enjoy. Yes enjoy is the main point. Our religion is about joy and ease. We need our kids to love going to Church. You cannot ask a child to sit for at least 30min during Mass and love it. Show them a video or an act. Show them that in hard times we have a superhero called Jesus. Take away the fear that destroys their future. All other religions show God as a dictator or in best cases as a school principal. You have to prove yourself to him. He puts you constant testing to see if you are accepted by him or not. Jesus showed us that we are already in God's arms. He didn't create our misery but it's made by us. World hunger, medical bills... There is enough of everything like Jesus showed us by his words. Yet we are jealous and envious of others. Once the Church reaches people and also makes them want to stay it is time to defend our religion and Church. As Lebanese, I know Arabic. I know what the Koran says. I understand the words that ask Muslims to destroy Christians. Don't be fooled by the English translation. It is far from accurate and makes the threat sound so peaceful. That is a very serious issue. The Church should be translating the Koran the right way. At least Christian leaders will understand the thread and don't underestimate it especially for non-Arabic speakers.</p> |
| <p>1) Poverty (Can I Afford to go into my Catholic Church). 2) My Catholic Faith (mix up with Culture). 3) Language or Communication issue. 4) Mobility of my Church to address distance of our members. 5) How well we presented our God to a modern time.</p>   |
| <p>1. Priestly Celibacy to be optional: Welcome priests who left the priesthood to get married back to full ministry. 2. Women to be have a key role in decision making in the Church e.g.: ordained as Deacons. 3. Revise the current English Mass translation. The current translation distances the faithful</p>   |

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| <p>from a full participation in the Mass compared to the previous English translation. 4. Reintroduce the third rite of Reconciliation. 5. Laity as parish administrators. 6. Parish Council to have a voice in selecting pastors. 7. Divorced and then remarried Catholics to be allowed to go to communion. 8. Clericalism to be replaced by genuine inclusion of laity in parish decision making.</p>   |
| <p>More Commitment to the faith.</p>   |
| <p>To be strong in our faith and commandments to encourage peace truth and not get side-tracked by worldly ideologies while we are being persecuted.</p>   |
| <p>Repent for our sins as a Church and return to the Gospel, preach repentance not accompaniment.</p>  |
| <p>Accept people for where they are at. To engage in a greater outreach with the community, linking in with the lonely and disengaged people, people of different faiths, the divorced and disaffected. To be more welcoming. There should be a Church voice welcoming gay people.</p>   |
| <p>A more inclusive Church. Guidelines replace rules. More women in parish governance and ministry.</p>  |
| <p>What is our Catholic identity?</p>  |
| <p>1. To remain true to the teachings of the Church. 2. To ensure the priests in our seminaries are well-formed. 3. To catechise our children well (through programs like Catechesis of the Good Shepherd). 4. To ensure that homilies properly cover important topics such as Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, Confession and Divine Mercy, the Eucharist, the Beatitudes, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the Cardinal Virtues, the lives of the Saints so that the faithful receive formation each week. 5. To encourage times of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to allow people to come together and pray to Our Lord for the parish and vocations. 6. To encourage the involvement of the youths in Sunday roles such as reading, bringing of the gift, music, choir; not just at Youth Masses. 7. To make visitors feel welcome and encourage fellowship outside of the Mass (ideas include a welcoming person at entrance to give bulletins as people walk in for 15 minutes before Mass, tea/coffee for 15 minutes after Mass). 8. Encourage family devotion to the Rosary. 9. Frequent confession times (half hour before daily Mass). 10. Encouraging reverence in the Church before and after Mass out of respect for Our Lord and to allow people to pray.</p>   |
| <p>We think God is asking us in Australia to increase/improve the Church engagement with our youths and young adults at this time, so evangelisation can be more effective. Our group is made up of parents gathering weekly for prayer meetings with Catholic/Christian articles/teachings for reflection and sharing. While we pray and try to influence our children's values and faith, we sense some limitation on the extent of our influence. We feel that we as a Church is not getting adequate engagement with our kids that they may live the Catholic/Christian faith for the rest of their life. They spend a lot of their time in social media, however we don't think teachings/inspirations from our faith effectively reach them in a way that catches their attention. Social Media is "media" via internet, just like books and the Bible are printed media to spread the Word. Secondly, our kids have very limited opportunity to personally interact with priests frequently; many times these interactions with priests inspire kids to become priests later in their life. Informal venues around the Church to allow these interactions are probably limited—sports facilities and function rooms next to Church grounds which the youths/young adults can use any day meet other Catholic/Christian youths, or even interact and be friends with the local priests. It would be nice if our youths having their prayer assemblies will always have a facility they can use, and hang out/relax with other Christians (or also with the priest) other times (instead of wandering in shopping malls and other unsafe places). This way, our priests may also gain increased insight about the youths of current times. As an example in the Philippines, most Catholic churches have parish centres with sporting facilities (e.g. basketball court) where a lot of youths hang around with their friends and also with the local priests. It is possible that some of those kids might have been inspired to become priests.</p> |
| <p>To do what He has always asked us to—to evangelise! He created His Church for mission! It's time to stop sitting around licking our wounds re the sex abuse scandal and go out and reach both our members who no longer attend Mass, as well as the unchurched. Each parish needs missionary teams to do this. Our Church seems to have become quite "unspiritual". We need priests to speak with passion! Like they live and love their faith and vocation. The faithful shouldn't be "lulled to</p>   |

sleep" each Sunday by a sermon. Don't get me wrong I truly love our priests and feel for them at this difficult time. My parish has two warm, hard working and loving priests. But for our Church to revive, the laity need to be "set on fire" when they come to Church. Let's stop ridiculous small talk about women priests etc., and do what Jesus asked all of us to do—proclaim the Gospel! The laity need to be encouraged to read the Bible daily. I have never been encouraged to do that at a regular parish Mass. Why not? We need to live the faith! That also means the laity need support outside of Mass to do that. Each parish also needs regular Scripture study and the like. Most of all the laity need to be invited into a living personal relationship with Our Lord. One of the best means to do that is run Life in the Spirit seminars. A key factor in why people leave the Church because they are never invited to do that or shown or told how to. Why don't we have "altar calls" after communion? Perfectly appropriate. People need to be excited about their faith. When other people see that, then they start getting interested and will ask questions. They will see that we are "real"!

To break down prejudice and come together as one.

Plenary 2020 submission. The following are personal comments and conclusions reached, based on my own experiences and observations of the decline of the Catholic Church over the past approximately 30 years. In answer to the question: "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" My response is:- 1. The Catholic Church and indeed all Christians need to be authentic, and at all costs remain faithful to the Word and teachings of our Saviour Jesus Christ as expressed in the Gospels. Therefore, the Catholic Church in particular must cease "dancing with the devil" of Marxism and atheistic environmental socialism, which it has been courting for the past 30 years. The Church is either knowingly complicit, due to Fabian Marxist infiltration, or it has been, naively coerced and fooled by the half-truths of the Fabian Marxist socio-environmental engineers. These Fabian Marxists have infiltrated every organization and at every level of human activity, in order to achieve broad consensus for their Communist world agenda since the U.N. Earth Summit of 1992 in Rio. The members of the U.N. and NGOs adopted the communist agenda of Mikhail Gorbachev and Maurice Strong the architects of Agenda 21, (the Earth Summit Strategy to Save Our Planet—1993). 2. Heed the warning of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a communist prison camp survivor and author of "The Gulag Archipelago":- "Be very afraid of Communism's devouring nature!" The Church in Australia needs to be made aware that it is failing Catholics and Christians of all denominations by allowing Marxist, Fabian academics to infiltrate its hierarchy, parishes and education systems mainly Secondary and Tertiary. When the Fabian former Prime Minister Bob Hawke addressed the Centenary celebration of the Fabian Society in 1984, he exhorted the Fabian motto of "the inevitability of gradualness", while his Government's prime objective was to change the mindset of the Australian people, to accept change as "the norm", in order to prepare the nation's mindset for radical Marxist social upheaval. He urged his fellow Fabians at the Centenary dinner in Melbourne, to temper their enthusiasm for change, by patiently waiting, as the Roman general Fabius did, when fighting his enemies, but urged them to strike and strike hard as Fabius did, when the time was right or all the waiting would be in vain. That was 1984, it is now 2018 and Australian society and especially the Church, is being struck and struck hard with social upheaval, and there is more to come unless our Church leaders turn to and rely upon the Word and saving grace of our loving Creator. As an example of a more publicized, high profile "leader" of a well-respected Catholic institution, look no further than John Falzon, former national director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, observed celebrating the Centenary of 1917 Bolshevik revolution and its atheistic communist leader Lenin, at the Russian Embassy in November 2017! "Please explain.".....?

I think God is asking us to return to the base tenets of the Christian faith, and to spread Jesus' message of love and acceptance in these difficult and divisive times.

A modern approach to keeping in touch with today's society without compromising our beliefs and evangelisation while also embracing our rich tradition. Renewing our sense of purpose of the Church through ministering to the marginalised, service to the poor, the homeless and lonely migrants. Our Church is fractured and we need to proclaim our mission and vision to the world to redefine our Catholic identity. The richness and diversity of our harmonious multicultural nation should be used

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| <p>as a strength and help us in building our relationship with God. This connection must be further strengthened with the young people in our communities urging them to interact with the Church. Prayer is important! Changes should be undertaken to make our faith attractive to all and foster a 21st century evangelisation. "We are all but travellers here."</p>  |
| <p>I believe God is showing Australians that it's time to be more accepting of diverse genders and sexualities. In wake of the same-sex marriage vote, last year. I believe that this is God telling Christians—that everything is going as planned. I believe that it is just time for the Australia community (including Catholic people) to hear out the LGBTQIA+ community. In order to be more accepting and loving of ALL Australians.</p>  |
| <p>Make Catholicism relevant and meaningful today in Australia, particularly to youths. Our public image has to change and individuals; clergy and laity need to deepened their faith and commitment to Jesus and the Church. ( see attachment)</p>   |
| <p>Constantly in my prayers, I feel God is asking Australia: 1. Follow and teach the Word of God as it was given in the Holy Bible, now more than ever. 2. The message of the Spirit for the Plenary 2020 is the same message as the Word in our Holy Bible. Be careful not to steer away from Jesus teachings. Any variation is of the Deceiver. 3. Do not be ashamed of the name of the Lord in our daily lives. Stand firm. 4. Australia, be ready to lead the Catholic Church of the world, especially in these times where it is being oppressed. For this, stand firm with the name of the Lord and abide by the Word of God.</p>   |
| <p>I believe God is asking us to stay strong in the traditions of our faith and our Church. We are living in a world where the beauty of the traditional family and its roles are quickly becoming a laughable minority—education for our congregations on why we have our core beliefs is paramount to creating a strength to respond to naysayers and to evangelise the many I know are seeking refuge from a world where they may soon not be able to call their sons "sons" and their daughters "daughters".</p>  |
| <p>We need more emphasis on God's love for us and the joy that comes from this love. Too many people see the Catholic Church as a place of rules, obligations and "fire and brimstone" sermons. Many parishes have moved on from this, but the perception remains. The Catholic Church needs to run an open day (a single day every year or two) where all parishes in a diocese, state/territory, or even across the whole nation are open for anyone to "come and see". Here the messages of love, mercy, joy, spiritual fulfilment, and community are shared with people who may be unwilling (for whatever reason) to come along to Mass. The open day messages of love, joy, spiritual fulfilment, and why Catholics do what we do (e.g. What's the Mass all about?) would be consistent across all Catholic Churches, so no matter which Church might be visited on the open day, the same message is heard. Regardless of whether we have "open days" or not, we need to be more welcoming and need to be perceived as more welcoming—this must be reflected in our words, but more importantly, in what we do, how we "open our doors" and our hearts to those seeking Christ through our parish communities, how we make everyone feel welcome, especially those who aren't Catholic or who have left their Catholic faith. I feel God is also asking us to encourage all Catholics (practising and not) to continue their Catholic formation throughout their earthly lives. Short courses, seminars, Scripture reflection evenings, and other formats to suit people at various stages of their lives need to be offered and parishioners encouraged to attend. We need to use more modern ways of encouraging non-Catholics to explore Catholicism as a faith option. We need a strong and effective marketing strategy, and we need to develop more pathways for people to explore Catholicism and be accompanied on their journey (back) to faith. There also needs to be more emphasis on community. Has Catholicism for some been reduced to a weekly "Go to Mass on Sunday—TICK" exercise? What about being involved in their parish community? How can we encourage all Catholics to be true followers of Christ—after all, Christ didn't just observe His Jewish religious and cultural traditions, He helped those in spiritual and physical need, established new teachings and a new covenant, and left a bigger legacy than anyone in history! As Catholics, we're called to follow His lead, but many think going to Mass on Sunday is enough! We need to establish</p> |

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| multiple options for people to exercise their baptismal mission—to be priests, prophets and kings, and to be Christ-like—and implore them to do so as part of practising their Catholicism.  |
| I don't know that he is asking anything new of us. He ask has always been the same but it is we who have changed. I think what we are asking of God has changed. God has asked us only 10 ten things... the commandments yet no one really follows that. Ask any Catholic if they know what the Ten Commandments are by heart. See what you get. We have move away from the basic principles of Christianity. We should go back to basics. Right now our collective faith is so low. I live in between two Maltese homes and presumably they are both Catholics. I never see them in church. Do they need to go to church to be a practising Catholic? Are they good people? Does it mean that not going to church makes them bad people? God always wants us to love thy neighbour. My neighbours are old. They have married children but I don't see any of them in church. Is it my job to invite them to church? They only turn up on the feast day to buy the sweets and food, yet they forget that God can nourish their minds every day and every week by knowing his words. They have lived here for over 50 years but they never come to church, I'm only new and have children so we try and go to church every Sunday as a family. But now it's hard to get my youngest to attend church as all her friends don't believe in God or in Jesus. They went to a top private Anglican school and no fault of the school as they built a chapel and learned a lot about God. But most of the parents and children don't believe in God because they have plenty of money. That's my assessment, if you are poor you depend on God else one thinks they know it all and control it all. Very sad actually! In my church, I feel God and I feel the sense of the community but outside my church it feels like God doesn't exist nor does my church community. I feel God's presence every day in my home; in fact every hour or two, I think of him. My work place is putting up a Christmas tree. Most companies don't put up a tree to be politically correct. But my company calls our end of year function a Christmas function. Most companies don't do that anymore. I talk to my team about God and allow them to decorate our offices with Christmas cheer. I allow my team member to go to Friday prayers because he is Muslim. I work for a multinational company and they are proud Christians. The CEO has a cross in his room in San Diego. I felt God's presence. How do we get every work place, education institution, shopping centre to feel the presence of God the minute they walk in, not just at Christmas time? I don't have answers to my own questions, let alone answering yours but I think God simply want us to know that he is always there when we need him. My girls can't stand reciting the same words over and over creed, why do we have to confess our faith? Isn't it a given considering we are there? Can we encourage more story telling? Change the format of Mass to more homily, more testimonies, more evangelisation, less reciting, more engaging based on our world today. |
| To spread the love of Christ, and to live the way Jesus wanted us to live.   |
| To change global warming.  |
| To look after our world.   |
| God is asking us to look to the future and to embrace each other its love as he accepted us. He asks us to clear our past our mistakes and those who have acted poorly as part of the Church.  |
| I believe God is calling upon us to stop slowly destroying the earth and for us to help plant more trees and try and stop climate change.  |
| I think that God is telling us to be more inclusive and optimistic towards people of all genders and background.   |
| God is asking us to help those around us that are struggling, displaced or being treated unfairly because those people are the people Jesus always focused on because they are the people who need help.   |
| I believe in today's society God is asking us to focus on being more welcome and open-minded. There has been and abundant amount of controversy and media surrounding the topic of those that the Church as a whole welcome in. Something that has come to light is the fact that often, communities such as the LGBTQ+ community are shunned to the side. I believe that we should think and act as Jesus would therefore, being welcome and show no difference between what colour,  |

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| <p>race, gender or culture. We are all the same race and just because we have differences shouldn't be a reason to be shunned or feel unwelcome.</p>   |
| <p>-To accept everyone.<br/>         -To help people in need.<br/>         -To respect everyone.<br/>         -Make this world a better place by actual making changes and not just talking about how we can change it.<br/>         -Educate people especially younger people and help with specific learning needs for them and not tell everyone the same thing, because everyone learns differently.</p>   |
| <p>I think that God should be focusing on Australia as a whole and not just the people of faith. I reckon that Australia as a whole and as a religious country is taking a step backwards. I think that God is trying to help us to become more of a country as one, and not a split community. Religion is trying the same old stuff as last time but God wants something new. I think that Australia as a whole needs to push forward and not be held back by the different religions in the country. God I think wants Australia to be one again.</p> |
| <p>I believe God is asking us to provide more support in speaking out against the injustices occurring in our respected countries, such as forms of discrimination like sexism, racism or gender discrimination. Contributing more and raising increased awareness about support groups like charities working for the homeless, drug and alcohol recovery, the disabled, the poor etc. And even getting behind organizations working for the benefit of our environment, like WWF.</p>  |
| <p>To be more inclusive and open the Church to contemporary possibilities. Move with the times.</p>  |
| <p>Unity, love and inclusion.</p>  |
| <p>To be more inclusive, to love one another, to care for the environment, be respectful.</p>  |
| <p>To consider the message of Christ and how rules man has invented cloud or oppose this message.</p>  |
| <p>To be a voice of change—open to different ways of achieving the goals of the Church.</p>  |
| <p>To be a more open and accepting Church, to be able to initiate real change in our Church communities to establish a vibrant youth filled Church.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking us to be inclusive, to live out the Gospel messages of Christ through our actions (practical actions extended towards all members of society), and to re-engage with the messages of the Gospel ensuring that we understand them contextually and in a modern personal sense. God is asking us to consider factors like the environment and multi-faith dialogue and acceptance.</p>  |
| <p>To be more inclusive and accepting of people, cultures, choices, etc. To be more accepting of a growing and changing society, whereby people choosing to be married outside, instead of in a Church, the marriage is still considered a sacrament. To allow a form of female leadership within the Church. To allow more transparent leadership decisions.</p>  |
| <p>To think long and hard about what the Church looks like in Australia at present, and in particular, who is excluded. God is asking us to get back to the message and heart of the gospels and in doing so, to ensure that this directs our lives and work.</p>  |
| <p>To make the Church more inclusive and relevant in modern day society.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking us to pull our heads in. God is asking us to come back to the grassroots aspects of the Church that he left for us 2000 years ago. We have lost our focus with wealth, politics, dogma and abandoned our real roots of community, communion, helping the sick, the poor, the homeless, etc. Equality in the Church is missing for all men and women and children. There is a hierarchy here that needs to be dismantled and reformed.</p>   |
| <p>How can we make our Church more relevant for people in the future, especially our young as they try to build an identity with the Church?</p>   |
| <p>I think God is asking us to be people who are open to change and to lead change within our Church. God is asking us to be inclusive of all people and recognise how we can include others in our Church. God is asking us to be people of the Gospel and deliver the Gospel messages through our actions and behaviours. By being people of change within our Church we are able to be people who have the</p>  |

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| power to share the message of the Gospel and promote the teachings of Jesus in our daily behaviours.   |
| To be inclusive and hope filled—to love one another as Christ loves us. To embrace and care for all people. To have a voice of hope and to act in that way.  |
| To be more welcoming and accepting to all who wish to hear the Word, regardless of their marital status, sexuality, gender or history. This is as Jesus asks us as individuals to be. Review rules and regulations of the Church in order to put a greater focus on accountability.  |
| God is asking for us to be people for others. To extend our mission further than the Church and to reach out and touch the lives of people of all walks of life.   |
| To reconsider the role(s) of women in the Church. How do we attract more young people?   |
| To care for one another, be faithful to God, to our family, to care for one another, be supportive in times of need.   |
| I think God is asking us to come together as the faithful to do specific, practical, urgent action to help others and our world: refugees, the environment, the marginalised in our communities. Practical, organised actions create a strong and common faith foundation.   |
| The Holy Spirit is calling us into a united faith that is characterised by concerns for the poor, vulnerable and our most precious gift the youths. How can we move forward with the clergy and laity together and offer this secular world the love and mercy of Jesus Christ?  |
| Our God demands of us that that we treat each other with love and compassion, and without judgement. Our God also believes that we each have gifts that we can give in service.  |
| To live with love and respect for one another regardless of race, creed, sex, etc.   |
| I believe God is asking us to reflect on the current position of the Church, in light of historical and current issues, and formulate change that will enable the Church to survive into the future. If the Church follows its current course, it will continue the downward spiral of ever increasing irrelevance in the community.   |
| God is asking us to be more Christ-like in ACTION. Christ is living in action in that he was a voice for the marginalised. The Church is no longer a voice for the marginalised and is in no way inclusive toward them. Women are treated poorly by an out dated patriarchal system that has very little relevance in the lives of Catholics today.  |
| God is asking us to put HIM back at the centre of our daily lives and remain committed to our faith despite all the challenges and changes surrounding us.   |
| Accountability and transparency. Keeping up with the times and finding that balance to reach out to these generations whilst maintaining the principles, teachings and values of the Catholic Church.  |
| For the Church to be more understanding of the experiences of its members, particularly those bereaved by suicide.   |
| To return to gospel values i.e. our faith is not so much about rules and regulations; it is about the love we show to others, particularly those less fortunate than us or those people on the margins of society. God is asking us to be less judgemental and more compassionate.   |
| Australia is a great, diverse nation. A source of unity and commonality for all, Catholics and non-Catholics is the family unit. I pray for more support, encouragement and emphasis on the formation of good families that foster virtues in the children—the future of our Church and nation. Strong families = strong Church = strong nation.   |
| To adopt sustainable energy and reject ethics of capitalism.   |
| "Firstly, we defined clericalism as an attitude among laity and ordained that the ordained is somehow superior, 'above', worthy of more respect, has an entitlement to more authority, a power of veto over lay decisions as desired, less accountability and less transparency in decision making than the non-ordained are entitled to by virtue of their baptism. This attitude can be overt or more subtle. What is God asking of us: That the ordained (priest, bishop) work alongside and with others, be seen as an equal and have an equal place at the table when it comes to decisions. That the gifts, talents and leadership skills of all the People of God be recognised, utilised and respected, whether ordained or not. That appropriate structural changes in parish, diocese and universal Church reflect |

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| <p>this reality (including an independent transparent process for the selection / appointment of laity at the table at all levels) and support the making of wise decisions based on true discernment and respect for diversity within unity".</p>   |
| <p>I think that God is asking of us down here in Australia to be attentive towards Christian persecution and religious freedom, especially as our nation is becoming more secular. In relation, I also believe He is asking us to defend our faith and not be afraid to say that we are Christians.</p>  |
| <p>1. To challenge the bishops and clergy who are trying to introduce heterodoxy into His Church. 2. God would like everyone in Australia and the world to start putting Him back in the centre of their lives, and for the Church to do its Mission in achieving this. 3. The Church leaders to educate the faithful in the Catholic Faith and Tradition. 4. For the clergy to have the courage (and for the faithful to support them) to stand up for Catholic Values in the Public arena (e.g. the failure of the Church leaders to stand up and be more vocal in the same-sex marriage debate, and the failure to continue to be constantly vocal about abortions, and the like).</p>  |
| <p>Creating a family atmosphere for priests. As human beings, God created us as social beings. In an attempt to draw some positive lessons from the past 50 years, it would be a good idea to establish new houses (or convert some existing ones) to facilitate the following:- 1. the new household should be able to accommodate at least 5 or 6 full time priests. 2. Plus a few additional rooms to accommodate seminarians or visiting or substitute priests. 3. This new premises is to become the "Bethany" for the full time priests, where their meals, housekeeping, laundry are taken care of by a household manager. 4. The existing presbyteries vacated by this move should be converted into buildings that can provide social services, such as childcare or aged care, and at reduced costs to the parish members. The benefits derived from such a scheme would be:- 1. Creating a family atmosphere for priests, where they can look forward to coming back "home" after a hard day at "work". 2. If we expect our priests to be Holy and role models for society, we cannot leave them to live alone. A family atmosphere will naturally evolve where priests can keep an eye on their brother priests, calling for a doctor or covering his parish duty in case of sickness, correcting inappropriate habits if need be, etc. 3. Economies of scale can be derived from running one single household rather than 5 or 6 presbyteries. 4. Availing existing presbyteries to evolve into centres that can provide works of mercy. Some ideas in implementing this change. 1. It would be highly unlikely that current existing priests would be open to any change in their current living arrangements, and that is understandable. So this plan is to be prepared and tasked to be rolled out over 20-30 years. 2. A new subject can be introduced into the seminaries to cultivate family life and fraternal responsibilities and correction amongst student seminarians so that as when they are ordained they can begin living in these houses. 3. Each household should have a dean and a secretary to ensure order, harmony and peace in the house. 4. This idea will need a different approach for country parishes where the geographical area is larger than city parishes. However, the key objective is to ensure that no priests lives alone.</p> |
| <p>God is asking us to stay strong and believe in your faith through the challenges facing us on a daily basis.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking Australians to protect his creation on earth, recognising the intrinsic value of our flora and fauna and acknowledging that we are one with the environment and not separated.</p>  |
| <p>I feel that the Lord is asking for acceptance amongst all groups. He wants us to continue to have peace and unity within all communities and make our country a better place. I feel he wants us to see that our world is becoming a place with many flaws and that he would like us to rebuild the world he made with love. He would want us to help those who are in need and to show that our environment is slowly diminishing.</p>   |
| <p>I think in today's world God is asking us to focus on the need to care for the environment. The recent natural disasters that have occurred in NSW alone seem to be a sign from the Earth and from God for the urgent need for the maintenance of the Earth God has created for us. Furthermore, I think God is asking us to focus on the repairing and replenishing of the Church after the results of the</p>   |

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| <p>Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse as these have left an impact on the youths of Australia and the adherents.</p>  |
| <p>To establish and maintain a closer connection between the parish priest and the Church community to create transparency in the practical and spiritual activities of parish life. For parishioners to be offered explanations and information by the parish priest when changes to existing parish practices occur. Thus recognising and respecting the existing parish history and culture. Transparency of changes would, with education enhance a positive experience of parish liturgical and pastoral life. Transparency across changes in spiritual and practical practices of the parish to be communicated and explained via the weekly parish newsletter and homilies.</p>  |
| <p>For His people to be faithful to His teachings as members of the one Body of Christ. To maintain an inclusive parish life. Inclusion of parishioners in decisions regarding parish activities for formation, education, liturgical and pastoral growth. Sharing decisions regularly to the wider parish community. Increased engagement of laity and a close connection between the parish priest and parish community demonstrates the belief that the Body of Christ is made up of many parts which all work together for His honour and glory. Inclusion and acceptance of Australian based liturgical celebrations in parish life without undue imposition of cultural practices of overseas born and trained priests.</p>   |
| <p>To be more inclusive of racial diversity and diversity within society (asylum seekers, marriage equality). Female leadership and involvement in the Church. Connections to the youths need to be stronger. Readings, prayers, etc., need to be more accessible (hard to interpret) for everyone. Adapt and change with modern times. Make Mass more interesting, music, etc. Develop the leadership and clergy within Australia. To be grateful for the country we're in—access to resources, etc. Be kind. To help others in need. Background checks for clergy and more transparency in the processes of the Church to help protect children. Marriage of priests. Bringing people together and a reason to believe in something. Faith, Inclusivity and equality. Giving and charity/selflessness.</p>    |
| <p>The same he has been calling us to do for the last 2000 years. Those things revealed to the Church fathers and the apostolic descendants, which I believe is moved by the Holy Spirit. Based on truth not relative to time or people. The Catholic faith is based upon scripture and tradition, in the same way scripture does not change and should not be ignored nor should tradition change or be ignored.</p>   |
| <p>How will the Church appeal to younger people? How will the wealth of the Church be distributed equally? Needs to adopt technology, social media—allow communication to occur between priests and people using social media.</p>  |
| <p>Get back to basics of the original Church teachings. Stop all the sexual abuse and report it to authorities. No Women priests. No priests should be allowed to be married. Stop all the changes to the Mass.</p>   |
| <p>I think it is important that we become a stronger Catholic community who understands our faith, and understand how to practice our faith. I like the idea of the Benedict option. We need to know more so we practice better. I believe it is no point saying you're Catholic but not practicing correctly or not explaining it to others correctly. We should start to make small steps to inform, educate and learn. One example would be to have a question about the faith box in every Church. The priest can read the questions, choose one, form a response and then read and answer it at the end of Mass, or end of the homily. This is just one example but I'm sure we can do small things like this which can help all of us grow stronger in our faith and understand it better. Thank you.</p> |
| <p>God is calling all Australians to be the best people they can be. The best as an individual, to be the best in a proper functioning Western Society. Apart of this is to stop sinning, and I know, I just sinned now by looking at a naked woman on my web browser. So the temptations are there, and as Christians we are called to overcome them. We, as a Western Society, need to subdue our passions, and to channel them according, as they were ought to be used. Even though we fall short, we must not let failures prevent us from progress. Failure is progress, because failure always turns into success with effort. Highlight effort, again, as Christians we ought to put an effort into being the best</p>  |

people we can be, so in a Western Society we can be a model example, a worthy and pleasant sight, and someone to draw inspiration from so as to wonder and ponder on what it is that sets us on fire. For me, the Holy Spirit of the Lord is what sets me on fire. I live for the Lord. And it might sound like a contradiction because I sinned a few minutes ago, but the Lord wants genuine efforts from Christians. The Lord knows we are not perfect, but must with all our mind and effort strive for it. For in our human nature we are weak, and in the clothing of the Lord we are strong.

There will be no renewal in the Church until we start to show reverence for our Lord who is truly, really, substantially Present in the Most Holy sacrament of the Altar. How is it that I went through Catholic schooling for 12 years and was never taught this? It was treated as though it was a piece of bread passed around from hand to hand. Why are the Tabernacles in our parishes put to the side in some corner and not given centre stage? Do you really believe that Jesus is really truly present in the Tabernacle probably on a few kilometres away from where you are right now? The same Jesus you heard about in the Gospel today there most likely on His own in the Tabernacle? All the problems and crisis and scandal facing the Church not only in Australia but through the world stem from our loss of faith and reverence in The Real Presence. We have all the answers to everything, we have become God, we do not need Him! How can that little piece of bread be God Himself? Does that priest really believe that after he says the words of Consecration he is holding God in His hands? If people really knew/were catechised properly about the Church's teaching on the Real Presence don't you think our lives would be much better? We have the fullness of the truth, God Present among us. We are denying our fellow brothers and sisters from other religions. We are not the salt and light for them. We are the laughing stock for them. We are hypocrites because of the way we behave. Those who do not behave the way they believe will soon believe the way they behave. We need to get back to basics. Jesus is there Present in the Most Holy sacrament of the Altar. We need to start behaving as though He is. Practical ways include kneeling for Holy Communion. Receiving Holy Communion on the tongue. Only allowing men to handle the Blessed sacrament. Having a modest dress code for God's house (should be modest all the time). No talking inside God's house. This is the same God who sent down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. The same God on Mount Sinai. The same God who sent the 10 plagues on King pharaoh. Nothing has changed since He Instituted the Most Holy sacrament on Holy Thursday some 2018 years ago. The Church has always taught this.

Is asking that spirit, integrity and authenticity continue with the implementation of all supported and accepted recommendations of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. That we also actively identify and quash attempts within the Church of using double-talk, legalese to side step the challenges of the recommendations.

Active participation of women in all leadership roles including decision-making. Allow women to become acolytes and deacons. Recognise the role of women in the early Church—correct bad theology as a reason to oppress women e.g. that Jesus only chose men. Inclusion and genuine welcome to those not like us e.g. gay and lesbian, Aborigine. Greater understanding and promotion of social issues, greater involvement in political issues. Invest in resources for young people.

God is asking of us in Australia at this time to care for one another, show our justice and compassion for those in need and to help and love everyone we know.

- "To be inclusive through radical love".
- Love is greater than a law—help migrants, young teenagers (anxiety/suicide/depression levels increasing).
- To serve others is the core of being an Aussie.
- To teach young children how to form their conscience.
- To pray. (in new and life giving ways).
- Renew the liturgy i.e. engaging, deep, well planned out homilies by priests—so that especially younger generations do not lose faith in Him.

God is asking of us in Australia to become more visible. The Catholic Church does amazing works of charity, yet the media does not project it, rather, the negative side is reported. Also, God is asking us

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| <p>to unite behind one practical goal per time unit (a year or two years...) and the Catholics should rally their strengths to achieve them. For example: ending homelessness, or ending domestic violence. Setting a goal has a huge power of uniting people.</p>  |
| <p>It would appear with the outcome of the Royal Commission on Institutional Response to Sexual Abuse, all Churches and other institutions have hit an all-time low in their duty of care. But a deep and insidious capitulation to a frightening lack of decency has somehow evolved over the centuries, and now, thankfully, has raised its ugly head for us to face. Yet it seems there is still a failure of heartfelt cognisance of this atrocious culture of leadership that our so-called 'men of God' have fallen into and has resulted in this abominable behaviour of protecting the institution (in the name of God) and denying the criminality of many Church's actions. If there is anything that God may be asking of ALL of us in Australia in view of this reality, it surely must be to redress the woundedness that has occurred—not just by financial compensation, not just by apologies—but to gather at a diocesan and national level and 'eat humble pie' in reconciliatory action.</p>   |
| <p>I think we need to introduce the third rite to the regular circumstances. This will protect the seal of confession.</p>  |
| <p>I believe that God tests us and asks us to learn acceptance towards things that are unknown and to show love and compassion in such a time where it is truly needed.</p>   |
| <p>This particular listening group at [ - ] parish [ - ] considered two issues. First [ - ] was limited to what do you see as the role of women in the Church. Results were—need for Church to fundamentally recognize equality between men/women—equality of discipleship in ministry; need for systematic opening of all positions in Catholic Church to women (incl. full ordination); need to recognize that women from our own culture may better reflect cultural needs and values of the community; as first step women should be able to be deacons and give homilies; need to use inclusive language in the Eucharist, readings, hymns, prayer services; divorced women should not be barred from sacraments; recognize women's right to control fertility through contraception; same sex rights should be recognized; encourage women's creativity to create rituals celebrating significant events e.g. blessing new home, pregnancy, going into care. Second issue was what else do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Results were: priests should be allowed to marry; role of laity to be accepted at all levels of decision making in Church hierarchy—should not be a matter of laity only being present at things like the Plenary 2020 meetings by invitation; canon law needs to be reformed to support changes and should be reviewed every 10-15 years to ensure it is up to date; canon law should not be used as a block to change; laity should be participants in the making of canon law.</p> |
| <p>Be enablers of change, time for discernment and listening. Need to eliminate the culture of clericalism. Respect for what priesthood has given now needs another model of authority and power. Need to promote a different model of Church. We need liturgy that engages youths. Need to meet people where they are. Need to widen the Church, it is bigger than a building. Promote the concept we are the Church, the people of God. Parents are disconnected from Church and impacted by the influence of secularism and consumerism so the challenge is how to evangelise in a secular consumerist culture. Welcome the divorced and remarried into the Catholic Church. Need to encourage families—see whole families participating in Church.</p>  |
| <p>To become spiritual warriors soft in heart but strong headed. The evils of sodomy, pornography, prostitution, and abortion have been legalised and western man proves he is of Satan's ways. This will only worsen (e.g. see greens/labour policies) as the Catholic family breaks down so all Christians must get prepared to fight the good fight. Regular confessions, daily rosaries, regular public rosaries, regular penance, know and obey the Catholic faith, courageous nuns and priests and bishops, and take the evil head on ... knowing Christ is our leader.</p>   |
| <p>To be more Christ-like in our actions especially towards others. To be more open, accepting and inclusive. To make the Church a place where people will WANT to come. When we speak with our actions, it is louder than just talking or the written word.</p>  |

I am reading a book by John O'Donohue in which he argues that our world has become over-consumerised and we have no time to pray. A fair bit of Truth in that idea. How about the churches Unite and fight back and COMMERCIALISE PRAYER, via the popular media, T.V., radio, press and phone messages? Using snappy short simple messages. Have you said a prayer today? Ask your God for his aid? Thank your God for the Blessings he has given you, The World, so on. Are you stuck in traffic? Say a prayer for someone sick, homeless people, your wife, parents, your own wellbeing, RAIN etc. etc. Use T.V. and radio's 10 seconds spots. Say on the hour before a News Break. Just ask the question. Suggest a topic, as above, or any number of other needs. WHY NOT DO IT NOW? The Media may wish to come on board with a better costing. I feel that ALL religions would join in and share the cost on a pro rata basis. The campaign would need to run continually for several months and from thereon at a reduced rate with extra ads say at Easter, Christmas as well as other times to work in with other Faiths. T.V.—Radio say 10 sec, commercial Newspapers, suggest 2col x 20 mm Bold Type: We need your prayers today? (suggest a group) Have you said a prayer, don't delay say a prayer NOW.

I feel that gluten free hosts need to be distributed during Communion at each Mass. I cannot consume gluten, and would like to participate in receiving the Eucharist each time I go to Mass. Some parishes I attend do provide a gluten free alternative, however I need to consult with the priest prior to the beginning of each Mass for this to be done. It is sometimes a challenge to locate the priest before Mass starts to find out if there are any gluten free hosts available for communion at the time. It would be easier if it were perhaps offered at each Mass as a routine, if the priest could have this available to the congregation, and mention it before communion is distributed each time. Not being able to participate in the Eucharist at Mass can be very depressing at times, as I develop a sense of being left out. Thank you to the parishes that are already providing gluten free hosts. However I feel it needs to be a part of each Mass and mentioned by the priest each time before distributing communion, and not so much of a challenge to have to locate the priest each time before Mass to request if a gluten free alternative is available at the time. As a Catholic, knowing that I have received the Eucharist, a symbol of the body of Christ at each Mass I attend is a nice feeling, a feeling of belonging to the Catholic Church community. When I do not receive communion because I cannot locate the priest prior to Mass, I feel left out. I am sure this is not the message that the Church would like to portray. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

I think that we, as individuals and as the Church founded by Christ, are being asked by God to be the personified love of Christ, and to share his word with each individual that we encounter. We are called to do this in the everyday moments of our lives in how we interact with those around us; a smile, letting someone in front of us in traffic, taking the time to visit the sick and elderly, etc. We are also called to do this by sharing our faith with those we live and work with or encounter along the way, by being faithful witnesses in the way we live, and by talking with people around us as the situation arises. We need to seek out these opportunities, rather than waiting for them to come to us.

Well for one, it's that your fat bishops and cardinals lead by example. Where's the vows of poverty and chastity? We're tired of you asking for alms and donations whilst you live in indulgences, you rape, you sodomise, you lie and then you take the high ground to preach, that what you cannot practise yourselves. There's no respect for you whilst Cardinal Pell is around ... he's the incarnate of the devil himself and the most detestable figure in Australia at the moment. Nothing defines your hypocrisy about the rights of women than your actions ... you refuse to give women an equal right to serve in the Church and on an equal footing with yourselves. But then you know all this and yet you stubbornly refuse to acknowledge it ... your arrogance blinds you to the obvious concerns of falling attendances, and the disdain and contempt people have for you as an institution. It's about going back to the roots of what St. Peter and Christ envisaged the Church should be ... an institution and symbol of hope, of love, of being a leading light. It is anything but.....!

To be inclusive of all: divorced and remarried. The poor in whatever way their poverty is manifested. All realities of sexuality. Those alienated from official Church, especially women. That truth be

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| <p>always named and listened to. That women be equal partners at all levels of the Church, in the way that they were in the Early Church. That Canon Law be recognised as a man-made system, and not treated as the revealed Word of God. That Scripture be translated from the Aramaic where possible.</p>   |
| <p>We are facing an ever-changing landscape in our communities and our Church needs to reinvigorate to keep up, without losing the essence and focus of our faith: the ever-living presence of Christ in our midst in the Blessed sacrament. Please see attached Personal Submission Document.</p>  |
| <p>We need to go back to the old traditions and stop making changes to suit people and not God. Changes that have been made already through the Vatican are failing. Go back to the Old Apostle Creed, the Rosary since Fatima which was given by our Lady and not by man, the tabernacle placed back in the centre of the Church where it belongs. People should be wearing appropriate clothing in church, women's heads should be covered. Stop making changes to suit this generation. God has not changed. Women should not be priests, priests should not marry, annulments need to be strict instead of giving them out to people who push and push for it. Go back to teaching the word of God and not what you think it should be. That is what I believe should happen not just in Australia but everywhere.</p>  |
| <p>I feel the Holy Spirit is asking for the word of God to be spread more through Australian television and Australian radio. A fine example of this is Eternal Word Television (EWTN) Alabama. Mother Angelica is the founder of this television station and is perhaps, a fine example for our Church in Australia to model on. As a Catholic, I have my television connected to EWTN. It has certainly brought me closer to my faith, reminds me to pray and why the Eucharist is invaluable in my faith journey. I love being a Catholic and I would love to see and hear my faith on Australian television and Australian radio.</p>   |
| <p>What do we think that God is asking us of in Australia at this time?—Re: the institutional Church • A decentralised structure where subsidiarity is prominent. • No tolerance of clericalism. • Focus on the People of God as a whole—what all have to offer in institution. • A less rigid more flexible approach within the institution—Jesus is the example. • To preach the gospel and focus on the main issues, the essentials—Gospel values. • To maintain a level of ‘purity’ in relation to its teachings / gospel values versus worldly values, thus a certain separateness for the ideal of holiness. • To present a nourishing faith and life for its members. • Openness, transparency, accountability. • An organisation focused clearly at all level on service as outlined in the Scriptures—diakonia. • That clerics in leadership positions show true and heartfelt remorse, on behalf of their colleagues, for the injuries inflicted on the sexually abused, so that through forgiveness, a gateway may be opened for their healing. • To refocus on the mission of the Church and reduce institutional aspects, simplifying things and making liturgy attractive. • Presenting the sacraments more meaningfully, helping people to rediscover their real meaning, rather than simply processing people through them with no follow up. • That the wisdom all the saints, mystics and prophets throughout the ages are listened to and their voice inform the institution of the Church. God speaks through ‘non- institutional’ ways, importantly. • A de-emphasis on the Catechism and a move to modern proven ways of educating children and adults. • To continue the listening and dialogue at all levels and always—as this is the Spirit working in the Church, in the world. • For there to be a major overhaul of structure, dogma and ‘rules’ using the best available knowledge, insights and principles and a process accompanied by listening and dialogue with as many as possible.</p> |
| <p>Priests should be able to marry so they live lives similar to those of their parishioners and can give relevant advice in their homilies and pastoral care.</p>  |
| <p>-Priests and their need for support * Married priests. * Increased number of Deacons. * Greater involvement of women. * Increasing participation of the youths and young adults. * The importance of outreach/ evangelisation. * Response to the Royal Commission. * For the Church to become more inclusive—creation care to be part of Church activity.</p>  |
| <p>Freeing up priests from any parish admin work. Catholic doctrinal tradition describes the priest as teacher of the Word, Minister of the sacraments and Leader of the Christian community entrusted to him. In an attempt to draw some positive lessons from the past 50 years, it would be a</p>  |

good idea to free up parish priest and assistant priests from any parish administration tasks or duties. The benefits derived from such a move would be:- 1. Changing the mindset of all those involved with the Catholic Church that a parish church is simply a branch of the mother Church, and reintroduce the proven notion that the parish church is the centre of the town, where every parishioner will feel an attraction to gravitate towards. One only needs to look at parishes that belong to the Maronite Eparchy or the Coptic Orthodox Church in Australia—and witness the daily and hourly buzz around the parish grounds. Whilst you will find a very small percentage who can point to their Cathedral (seat of the bishop), you will however find a big percentage of their congregation on first name basis with their parish priests. 2. Freeing up time for the priests to carry out his duties—as humans we are naturally attracted to Holy Things and Holy people. A priest must be able to mix in as many circles as possible if he is to attract souls to God. So in the first place—a priest must be able to avail himself to the family circle in family dinners or get-togethers—so the children can get to know him. A priest must be made welcome to youth groups and outings and workshops, etc.—so when an excursion or a service project is being planned by the youths leaders—a priest will be welcomed to accompany the group. Just as a teacher knows everyone in their class by name, or a football coach knows his team members by name, so the priest must know—as much as possible—his congregation by name if he's going to have any chance of leading them spiritually. 3. Teacher of the word: a teacher needs time to fill himself with knowledge and information to be able to give it out—so he needs time for daily studying and reading. One cannot give what one doesn't have. A teacher needs time to set up or take part in talks and seminars, whether in the parish or outside.

Why are you denying and hiding from the truth of child sexual abuse in the Church. Why to wish to protect the guilty priests, bishops, and cardinals? Even your Head in Rome denies these criminal activities. And let's face it you are the biggest criminal organization in the world. Your secret organization pays no tax to any government but cries poor when in fact you are the richest crime syndicate in the world. I'm sure your God would be disgusted in all of you .

3rd rite of reconciliation. No more abuse.

The Lord is asking us to stay firm in the teachings of Christ and His Church. I believe the Holy Spirit needs to be allowed to move in power across this Great South Land of the Holy Spirit. People need to have real encounter with the Spirit of God and His love and mercy, so that all will see the greatness of Our God. Figures such as Archbishop [ - ] and [ - ] need to be supported, not torn down by some elements of the clergy. A priest in our parish, the moderator of three parishioners, has openly criticised Bishop [ - ] and others that have stood firm on the faith. I am in the Diocese of [ - ] and our present bishop has not been instructing his flock in the teachings of the Church with regards to same sex marriage. In his pastoral letters, his message on this issue was not clear and it created much confusion amongst the people attending Mass, etc. The priests in our parishes need to understand why Our Catholic schools need to be more authentic in the manner the faith is taught. Many teachers in our Catholic schools that teach Religious Education are not firm in the faith, they do not teach/ agree with the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church', they teach their own beliefs and criticise the Church. I have been a teacher for nearly 30 years in the same Catholic Secondary College and I have seen and witnessed the decline in good quality Catholic teaching. I have personally suffered much persecution for my Catholic/ Christian beliefs at school. There have been and are teachers who openly criticized students who have a faith and practise it, live it out, speak up about social issues that plague Australian society. It seems it is okay to have a social/ moral stand on poverty, homelessness and other social issues affecting Australia but you cannot speak up about sex before marriage, homosexuality, etc. I have been investigated for teaching the truth, Catholic teachings because it has offended certain people in our community. It seems that the 'world' is teaching our Catholic community and the social modern view of sex before marriage, homosexuality and same sex marriage are normal and okay. Teachers like me are few in number and many keep silent so as to not be found out for fear of reprisals. There is an element of fear amongst the few true believers. I pray that parishes get back to basics. Teaching people of God's love and mercy, the

reality of sin and its effects, the real reason Jesus died a cruel death for all of humanity. I feel that many clergy do not know the reality in their hearts of the power of the Blood of Jesus, the victory he purchased with His ultimate sacrifice so how can they teach their flocks. My husband and I we pray earnestly for the Church in Australia to be renewed by the Power of the Holy Spirit. WE are Charismatic Catholics and we have witnessed great changes the Spirit of the Living God can bring on our own lives and the lives of our brothers and sisters in the Servants of Jesus Covenant Community.

I think God is asking us to have a good look at ourselves and how we have lost our way in this broken world. There are obligations involved in being a practising Catholic such as attending Mass on Sundays. Many of my friends do not attend Mass on Sundays but still go to Holy Communion on the Sundays they attend. No viable excuses such as illness or travelling overseas, etc. is given. Have we watered down this obligation? Many people also do not attend Mass anymore because of the corrupt practices in the Church such as clerical hegemony and abuse where some priests tell lies in order to protect the Church. Their mindset is that the Church is much more important than the victim. This has had the effect of irreparably damaging the Church. How do we fix this problem? The clergy could begin by telling the truth. The era of cover-ups is over. The Church needs to cleanse itself of its bad members. It is only in this way that people will come back to the Church and believe in it and what it represents as a positive influence in their lives. This week, a priest in Tasmania was sentenced to 4 years' jail for historic sexual abuse (raping of young boys). He is one of many who have been jailed over the years for this heinous practice. The sentences are far too short in comparison to the broken lives of their victims. I think God is asking us to look at priestly celibacy. Is it such a great thing in the Church today? Celibacy should be optional. If a man wants to become a priest and stay celibate, that is his call. If a man wants to become a priest and get married, welcome him into the fold. It would go a long way in alleviating the huge problem of paedophilia. After all, he is a man before he becomes a priest and as a man has the human desires of the flesh which are healthy. In this age of the Church with a dearth of priests, why not bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation? I remember some years ago our lovely late parish priest practised this rite and the Church was full. Someone "dobbed" him in and he had to cease the practice. The result was that only a handful of people now go to either the First and/or Second Rite. Another point I raise is why cannot women at least become Deacons in the Church? I know ordination is out of the question but why not Deacons? They are relegated to the title of "adult servers". That is demeaning and leaving them in the lowly status of being servants instead of participants. In order for the Church to survive in these modern times, it has to be more relevant to today's society especially the egalitarian society in Australia. Priests should get off their pedestals and collaborate with their parishioners in a theme which represents "I come to serve not to be served". However, the laity needs to wake up to itself as well and not be so obsequious in their encounters with their priests. Treat them with respect but never believe that they are some sort of a God.

Churches to become the social and community hub of the parish. In an attempt to draw some positive lessons from the past 50 years, it would be a good idea to create an environment where the church hall, grounds and presbyteries become a social and community hub for the parish congregation. The benefits derived from such a move would be:- 1. Replacing the TV/internet as well as pokies in the clubs with a viable and sustainable means of social entertainment for the whole family. 2. Creating an outlet for kids to mix with other kids in a clean environment that can be easily monitored and controlled by volunteer older teenagers. 3. Creating an outlet for teenagers to spend their energies on worthwhile activities, sports, community aid, picnics. 4. Creating an environment where youths will want to come and listen to the word of God preached, because it's being done in a location that they are attracted to. 5. Making a venue available for social clubs, dance clubs, book clubs, sports clubs. 6. These hubs will become fertile grounds for all young men and women to discover their vocation and their future partners—be it in religious life or finding like-minded partners in married life. 7. Availing low cost venues for wedding parties, baptism and birthday parties, feast days parties, etc. to members of the parish congregation. 8. These hubs can become centres for young mothers to seek help and advice from older more experienced mothers who have

more time on their plate. 9. These hubs can become centres where young men can find mentors in many diverse fields from older more experienced men who have more time to spare. 10. These hubs can be become an affordable outlet for retirees to spend time socialising together. 11. As highlighted in a previous submission, the ideal situation would be that no priest be allowed to live alone, and instead, creating a family atmosphere where 5 or 6 priests can live together in one location, that is geographically central to their individual parishes, and where every possible family atmosphere can be created for them so they don't feel like they've missed out on family life. 12. In doing this, it would be prudent and beneficial to convert all the vacated presbyteries into a purpose structure that develops the ethos of "Catholic works of mercy", such as community halls with catering facilities, or mini aged care centres, or mini childcare centres, or mini homeless shelters. The purposes can be as diverse as the needs as are.

Pray to God.

From [ - ] Read John 6: 25-29. Some of the people who had been part of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand by Jesus (v 26/27) asked him "what must we do to do the works God requires (v28). Jesus answered, "the work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent (v 29). When Jesus spoke about the works of God, the Jews immediately thought in terms of 'good works'. It was their conviction that by living a good life, it was possible to earn the favour of God. They held that people could be divided into 3 classes—those who were good, those who were bad and those who were in between, who, by doing one more good work, could be transferred to the category of the good. So, when the Jews asked Jesus about the works of God, they expected him to lay down a list of things to do. But that is not what Jesus says at all. (William Barclay. The Gospel of John) For discussion; the primary work that God requires from us is faith. [ - ] is a pastor with Hillsong. From [ - ] S.R.E Teacher. We must live justly, transparently, honestly and engage lovingly and humbly with our God and the world. Avoid hypocrisy, secrecy and self-protection. SHOWING MERCY TO THOSE AROUND US.

We need to bring back the missions, especially the Redemptorists. We need to seek the "Lost tribes of Israel" first.

God throughout Human History has always called human beings into loving relationship with Himself, and this basically is what every human being longs for deep within (whether He/she is conscious of this or not). That is what God wants first for every Australian. Next, God's Holy Spirit wants us to mature in the spirit, to grow in Holiness and Wholeness, to co-create with Him and to co-labour with Him. To do this in the Catholic Church today, we need to start with Faith Formation of adults. Next we need to review and change how we do Religious Education from Kindergarten to High School.

Music has a unique role in the liturgy: its purpose is to enhance the experience and to encourage pondering of the liturgy. Therefore, liturgical music should emphasise theological truths, engage the intellect, support the solemnity of the liturgy, and enrich contemplative prayer. Music should, further, promote the value of silence, rather than seek to cover it up, for God's voice is most easily heard in the silence of contemplation of Him. A deep regard for older forms of liturgical music should also be nourished, as it is important for the Church to maintain its roots and it would be a shame to let such traditional and beautiful music be lost and no longer appreciated. The faith of many youths is fading and their love for the Mass is non-existent, not being it is not 'entertaining enough' but because of a lack of understanding of its necessity and liturgical richness. Because of this, an appreciation of the liturgy should be nurtured through a theological and philosophical basis. Furthermore, many children in Catholic schools today have a limited or distorted knowledge of the Catholic faith. Some of those who teach the Catholic religion at the schools are not practising and/or do not agree with certain teachings of the Church. Teachers should undertake the RCIA or some other intensive catechism programme; and they should consider their obligation to support the ethos of the school and, thus, the faith. Contraception, abortion, and other major pro-life topics as well as homosexuality and warped gender ideology are real and prominent issues. The Church often struggles to communicate the truth with charity due to prejudice against Her and Her teachings.

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| <p>People must be supported (but not actions that are morally wrong) and brought to a true understanding of the value of human life, human sexuality, and the family.</p>   |
| <p>More faith. The Mass is the beauty of our faith. No need to change it—it is not a concert or a praise and worship. To engage the youths more through doctrine classes, philosophy, talks. More young, faithful and holy priests.</p>   |
| <p>To begin with, I have trouble with the way in which the question is framed. Does the “us” referred to include me as a layperson? Surely officials within the Church recognize that they are the public face of the Church, that it was those from within their ranks who brought the Church into its current disrepute, and that they are the ones best placed to improve the situation. To me to include laypeople in the question, in the current environment, seems like an effort to diffuse responsibility. I think laypeople can provide the answers if the hierarchy has the courage and selflessness to act on their advice. The first thing that God is asking of the Australian hierarchy is that they alter the rules governing the Plenary Council so as to give laypeople more representation and voting rights. They are underrepresented at the moment with less than 2 laypeople for each of the dioceses and ordinariates. The notion that vocations to the priesthood should come almost solely from young immature men needs to be abandoned. Not only is there not enough of them coming forward but there is good evidence that to induct them in their adolescence and psychosexual immaturity and swear them to a life of celibacy brings with it great problems. God presents the solution to us; call on the many married men of proven character and stability who would willingly take up the call. There is not a shortage of vocations in Australia; there is a shortage of imagination and willingness to share power on the part of the hierarchy. It almost goes without saying that the Church must act without fear or favour to rid itself of all those who have committed sexual abuse and those who covered it up. Until the Church is seen to have done this it will continue to lack moral authority in the world generally and amongst its own members. I believe God would like many who have left the Church to return and I believe that one of the biggest single changes the hierarchy could make to achieve this would be to offer public and communal absolution of sin without private confession to a priest. One-on-one confession has been one of the major opportunities afforded sexual abusers amongst the clergy and it speaks of a relationship between priests and laypeople which is no longer appropriate. The supplication required of lay people before their confessor should be practiced by both clergy and laypeople before God not by laypeople at the feet of priests. In summary, • Recognise it was clerics, not laypeople who brought the Church into its current disrepute. • Increase the representation and voting rights of laypeople at the Plenary Council. • Recruit priests from the ranks of mature married men. • Rid itself of all those who have committed sexual abuse and those who covered it up. • Offer public and communal absolution of sin without private confession to a priest.</p> |
| <p>1. Catholic formation stretching from early education to adulthood. (On-going formation and support). (Understood it also starts within the family cell). We need the Church to stand strong in the sacraments, bring back the beauty of Mass, teach Church etiquette, have Bible studies, parishes to hold Adoration/Holy hour, better collaboration between youths and young adults and the older generations (not to be ageist or patronising). We all need on-going formation and to be reminded of our rich history that makes us Catholic. 2. Practising Catholic teachers in our schools, so that our youths can receive well-formed and solid Catholic teaching. 3. More collaboration between Roman Catholics and Eastern Catholics. 4. Priests and deacons to also get ongoing formation and support so that they too are aware of the rapid development of today's world, which will assist them in preaching to the people of today. Homilies that will be engaging and relevant, but of course spoken with love. 5. Continue to push our social justice movements/groups to society. St. Vincent de Paul, Caritas, Catholic Mission to the secular world—perhaps have more promotional materials on social media. 6. Welcome diversity, the new migrants to Australia can bring their cultural traditions and they too can participate in liturgy.</p>  |
| <p>"Come back to me" words of that very familiar hymn. Another hymn "restore to me the Joy of my salvation". Pope Francis proclaims the Joy of the Gospel. The only way to renewal of our Church is through Repentance. Each individual member and the Church as a whole needs to repent before</p>   |

God for our failure to manifest the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. "The loving kindness of God leads us to Repentance". The prayer of the Our Father which the Church has been saying since the time of Jesus on earth will be fulfilled. Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Your Will be done not mine Lord. We need a renewing of our minds through the word of God. We stopped teaching the catechism to our children and are now faced with a generation of adults and children who do not know the basic doctrines of faith taught in the Apostles Creed. If we do not believe in the truths of the Gospel and live our life accordingly, how can we expect the faith to be attractive to others? If we are not promoting the Cross of Christ as the way to salvation, healing and wholeness what are we promoting? The world cannot fulfil the desires of our hearts through the Holy Spirit may we "come back to God" and fulfil the prophecy over this nation Australia that we are "The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit".

To remain true to the teachings of the Church. Many of the teachings are being watered down, particularly in our schools, to appeal to sections of the community and this leaves a lot of grey areas where things are left to the conscience rather knowing that something is right or wrong, such as going to Communion after deliberately missing Sunday Mass.

Question—What is God asking of us in Australia at this time when it comes to the Eucharistic Liturgy? 1. A priest /celebrant who is first and foremost a member of the People of God. Symbolically conveying this can be important e.g. sitting with the People during the readings. 2. That we have suitable celebrants with a community focus. 3. That we have homilists that can be readily understood by the people. This is more important than merely filling a vacancy from another culture or religious tradition. Homilies are given that speak to the heart as well as the mind, ones that relate to real life experience, and the balance between what we owe to "God and to Caesar"; how to live as a Christian in today's society. The homilist should be the person who can do it best, not automatically the ordained person, who may not have the best skills in this area compared to others in the congregation. 4. That Scripture be proclaimed with liveliness by trained and well-prepared readers. 5. That there is a certain awe in the liturgy that has been lost. Perhaps the new cosmology word view could bring this into the liturgy. 6. That the language of the liturgy be revitalised—everything needs to be looked at across the whole liturgy so as to make it relevant to today's world and current theology, psychology, and science e.g. the quantum aspect and the cosmological / evolutionary aspects. 7. The language of the liturgy needs to incorporate the predominant view of who God is, what God is like (panentheistic—God is one with us and we one with God) with appropriate relevant images of God, especially in the Gloria, Creed. Also, liturgical language needs to be in the contemporary idiom, avoiding anachronisms and addressing the listeners in a simple, direct style. The use of words like thy, thou, consubstantial, almighty ... and phrases such as '... and he descended into hell' and '... enter under my roof' are just a few examples. Language to be always reverential in tone. 8. Liturgies need to be more intimate—like God is with us. 9. Liturgies that are flexible have the potential to be far more creative. 10. The Third Rite of Reconciliation was popular and helpful to people. Bring it back. 11. Liturgies that are more inclusive (male and female) at all levels. 12. Inappropriate language needs to be changed where that is inconsistent with who God is and who we are in God e.g. Lord I am not worthy to receive you, etc. 13. Songs that are relevant to younger people and youths need to be incorporated into liturgy as a priority. And a Mass time e.g. evening, that is more suitable to those of younger teens or young adult age, should be considered.

Serious re-evangelisation.

What he has asked of his people in all times and places: fidelity to his teachings and, by his grace, the constant renewal of our minds, hearts and actions. Christ has revealed the end and the means, and these do not change with time or place. This answer might be scandalous for some, but if it is, it is the very thing we need to be reminded of. That is why, for a terribly ambiguous and huge question, I will choose one proposal. Four facts: 1. Huge percentages of Catholics have no idea what the Church teaches or why. They have had no encounter with any of the great Catholic intellectual figures or books, and they find reading the Bible on their own a daunting task. 2. The Church can no longer depend on her schools to address this issue since the vast majority of these people are years and

decades beyond school age. In fact, these are the parents and teachers of the school kids. Practically ignoring the formation of everyone outside the incoherently stretched category of ‘youths’ is disastrous. 3. Your typical parish runs practically nothing to address this crisis of ignorance. It is not far off the mark to say that only about 6 parishes in the entire Archdiocese of [ - ] hold weekly talks or Bible studies. 4. This problem cannot be solved at the parish level since not every parish has the personnel, time, resources or expertise to run these, and perhaps not the audience to attend. A solution: Systematic, all year round catechesis, organised at the diocesan level and executed at the deanery level. This means that sessions are held for a given deanery, but all of the administration (promotional materials, employment of speakers, etc.) is organised by the Diocese. It needs to be run and operated at no cost to attendees, and by people with proper qualifications who are committed to this task. People need to be employed on a part-time basis by the diocese to do this essential task. If we employ more people to do admin work than we do people to go into our parishes to run catechesis and Bible study, is this not manifesting a problem? This is not a magic pill for all our problems, but it is addressing the roots. These events are not to be assessed by numbers of attendees, because this is about renewed fidelity and feeding the flock. If only three people attend, it will change their lives, and this will be where your renewed families and priestly vocations come from. The success of these events is to be measured by the quality of the teachers and the fruits in the attendees live over time. What is God asking of us? Perhaps, ‘Why do you strain out a gnat but swallow a camel?’ Why do you pour out endless amounts of stress, time and resources on persons, places, events and institutions that are not the immediate, essential concern of the Church, yet fail to feed your own flock with the truth? We know what needs to be done, let’s do it.

I think the Lord is asking us to spend more time in Adoration to allow an intimate encounter with him.

I think what God is asking of us is to continue the same mission He entrusted to us 2000 years ago—to evangelise the world. How we are to do this in Australia is another question. In an increasingly secular society, I believe it is all the more necessary to remain faithful to the Church’s teachings. This, however, must be accompanied with explanations catered to those who do not know or understand what we believe and why we believe. Some secular issues we need to be more vocal about include: • Firmly upholding the dignity of human life particularly issues like: o Abortion, o Euthanasia, o Contraception, o Embryonic Cloning. • No to same-sex “marriage”. • No to the “gender spectrum”. Evangelising the world also includes evangelising our brothers and sisters within the Church. Many people may be baptised but few are catechised and even fewer evangelised. We must explain the Church’s teaching in love but we must remain faithful to her teachings. Some issues include: • No women priests or deaconesses. • The discipline of celibate priests—we should also explain that our Eastern Churches have validly married priests too. We must proclaim the truth in love yet not water it down. It may seem difficult to do both, but our God is the God of the impossible (Lk 1:37). But before we can give, we must first receive. As such, we need to form our leaders and our youths—we must form our disciples into apostles. Some ways to encourage spiritual growth would be: • Regular Eucharistic adoration at every Church—hopefully weekly and if possible, perpetual. • Fostering greater devotion to Our Lady and praying the rosary. • Openness to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. • Fostering greater devotion to Divine Mercy. • Catholic education taught better especially at Catholic Schools. o Teach Theology of the Body. o Catechesis of the Good Shepherd—Montessori method. • More support for groups like: o The Culture Project. o Fire Up Ministries. o Parousia Media.

Can we make our behaviours more relevant to our community? Is formal religious instruction as meaningful in this modern age we live in? How can we make it relevant and encourage people back to Catholicism?

I think God is asking for a more communal Church. I would like to know that when I attend Mass at any Roman Catholic Church, it’s okay to receive the communion by tongue and that if I prefer to take the Eucharist from a priest, it’s okay. I was baptised in a Roman Catholic Church but feel more at home in a Maronite Church because of the traditions they hold. In saying that I am not a looney

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| <p>traditionalist, more moderate but I feel the title of extraordinary minister has become more like the norm (ordinary ministers). My point is if people don't mind taking the Eucharist from any person, that's fine but if we prefer the priest I shouldn't have to sit at the back of the Church to see what side the priest will give communion, there should a set side for all priests which they follow. Also I should have a priest tell me that my hands were made to receive the Eucharist properly because I opened my mouth and the Eucharist fell on the floor. I attend Daily Mass and have been for over 15 years and a certain parish you will see the side where the priest distributes communion is always longer than the other side so it's not only me who feels this way, not to mention that in this particular parish, only acolytes distribute communion and are all dressed in garments. I just want to feel at home in Mass and the fact I feel traditions are important isn't a bad thing. Don't get me wrong; there are some very traditional priests, one who even tells the congregation that whoever has children must come only to the priest for a blessing. My point is I feel God is asking that we can cater for traditionalist and people not so traditional without anyone feeling uncomfortable. A medium where all feel welcome and invisibly welcoming all without the notion that there is anything going on. A not-so-traditional Catholic will not get annoyed if traditions are in place but a traditional Catholic would. Example, I saw a priest go to the side to distribute communion while he sent extraordinary ministers to the middle. That's okay, I'll walk over to the side of the Church. I don't mind but it's things like these were the significance of a priest Distributing Communion watered down.</p> |
| <p>I think God is asking people of faith and people of goodwill to work together for the Reign of God. We need to have interreligious dialogue, putting aside differences, and embrace a large vision of a world where peace and harmony exist. We all belong to the one human family, and also the one creation which includes plants and animals. Unity in diversity is what God wants. "That all may be one".</p>  |
| <p>God is asking a humbler Church without power struggle in the Diocesan level. We need a bishop who is faithful to the calling not the one who does things for his popularity. We need transparency in finance matters. We need more faithful priests who are true to their calling and good pastors. We need a listening Church at all levels, not only a few groups who dominate. We need a Church that is faithful in its teachings.</p>  |
| <p>1. Young people—To be more welcoming of younger people. To be able to bring the faith to the younger generation. 2. Faith formation—Greater faith formation for the faithful believer. Emphasize the importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist (especially attendance on Sunday and also daily Mass). 3. Parish priests—For parish priest to have greater capacity to reach out to the community by increasing their presence not just at Church/parish but in local schools, retirement village, etc. (real presence in the community). Increase accessibility to parish priest for spiritual direction. 4. Catholic schools—To provide true teaching of the Catholic faith in the Catholic schools. Re-evaluate how the teaching of the faith is being conducted. For the Catholic schools to emphasize sharing of the faith to the parents. Teach the parents on the importance of family education.</p>   |
| <p>To evangelise all people to have a personal relationship with Jesus and love Him. This should be done through the sacraments: frequent Confession, daily Mass, Adoration. Also teaching people how to have a daily prayer life, pray the Rosary and speak to God. The clergy, religious, lay people and communities need to work together to achieve this.</p>   |
| <p>To see us grow in our love and appreciation of the sacraments. This includes faith formation and programs around developing sound sacramental programs, as well as people being able to access the sacraments.</p>   |
| <p>We need to listen to one another and be proud of our faith, we are asked to be more involved in standing up for our beliefs. We need to lobby groups to support our beliefs, not to give up because it is TOO HARD.</p>  |
| <p>Topic—a Personal Living Relationship with God and the faith. Community—Accepting that we have this to varying extent, how do we deepen this? How do we share this personal living relationship with God with others? How do we endeavour to initiate people into such a relationship (how do we</p>  |

facilitate others taking a similar though perhaps parallel journey in faith in the direction in which we are journeying?). And on the Community aspect, how do we encourage active participation in the faith Community and support those who feel some sense of belonging to such a Community so that their participation continues? So what is God asking of us in Australia at this time in relation to this issue or topic? In summary, for ourselves, to participate in the large range of opportunities that are often available and according to what attracts and draws us individually; To work with others to make better known the range of opportunities that are there and to develop them where they are absent or not so accessible; To look at the barriers (e.g. lack of inclusivity) and missed opportunities that exist in some existing structures or occasions and to utilise the gifts of all to build up faith / community and to value diversity; Lastly, to be a faith community that reaches out beyond itself as part of its core mission. This will further the living of gospel values and draw those who see evidence of a faith / life connection there.

1- Why do you think Catholics have left the Church? The sex abuse crisis: too many paedophiles in the clergy, which is growing worse. The Church's stance on homosexuality: apparently the Church has taken a very SOFT stand on SIN especially the LGBTQ movement and its evil agenda. Novus Ordo Missae: the Novus Ordo represents, both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session XXIII of the Council of Trent. Women as priests: apparently the spirit of jezebel is flourishing in the Church specially women bluntly defying Gods teaching and serving the Eucharist and participating in the priest duties which is an abomination. Only ordained deacons and priests are allowed to serve the Eucharist. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its Saviour." Ephesians 5: 22-23 "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." 1 Timothy 2: 11-12, 2-What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the words "Catholic Church". The Catholic Church, also known as the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic theology is based on the Nicene Creed. The Catholic Church teaches that it is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ, that its bishops are the successors of Christ's apostles, and that the Pope is the successor to Saint Peter to whom primacy was conferred by Jesus Christ. It maintains that it practises the original Christian faith, reserving infallibility, passed down by tradition. The Latin Church, the twenty-three Eastern Catholic Churches, and institutes such as mendicant orders and enclosed monastic orders reflect a variety of theological and spiritual emphases in the Church.

I have a real sense that we are being encouraged to be bold and daring—to step out of what we know and have always done, and move towards something new in the Australia and in our Australian Church.

To be assertive of the needs of the homeless and people out of work. I am aware this doesn't work for everyone, but I feel if they were given an opportunity and encouragement to do some work, labour, or activity instead of only relying on benefits or handouts, it would give them some sort of self-worth. Pride and ability to restart their life.

Introduction to Jesus—Jesus is the only human to call himself God. None of the other Prophets called themselves God. So, He is either a liar, a mad man or who he says He is. A liar. No. He would not have gone through the crucifixion willingly. He would have lied his way out and ran away to hide. A mad man? No. How could a mad man have created all those miracles and had the wisdom to teach and interpret all the prophesies that had been made about Him to the Chief priests? He has shown us the way through His teachings on life, death and resurrection. Did He exist? There is enough recorded history to say yes. With all that has happened over the last 2,000 years, He is here to stay. What would life be like without Jesus and his teachings to help us understand about life and death? Jesus asks each one of us the same question: What are you searching for? Do you know the meaning and purpose for your life? We as humans do not have all the answers. But we have the freedom to choose. Which path will you choose: today or for all eternity. As we go through life we learn to listen. Ask for the grace to receive the faith so that when He reveals himself to you, you are ready.

Everything is about love. Love of God, love of self, love of others. We are united to God, each other and the world through the Spirit where everything exists together. We are born through God, we live with God and we die in God. So we are here to serve and be served. To spread the word of God by living our lives and setting an example. There is our false self and what we seek is our true self. Our false self is our ego, our greed, seeking possessions and worldly status. Our true self is letting go and relying on God, living in this world by the example Jesus gave us. Like Jesus we are born into this life through God, we live our lives with God and we end our lives in God. We are the living Trinity. Go and live your life. I am... in Heaven.

Being Christian—When we are Baptised we enter into a loving relationship with God. We allow babies to receive the sacrament on the understanding that the Parents, Godparents and Christian community take responsibility to raise and educate the child to be a Christian. With adults, we require that they are inducted through the RCIA programme where they can take responsibility for their own promises and live as Christ asked us to live. As in the early Church, this was a process to determine that the candidate was committed to following the teachings of Christ. To love God and to love each other. Loving God is to live a life of loving, caring and serving others. To be Catholic means to live as Christ lived. Looking after those who can't look after themselves. To do God's work. We are His worldly servants. It means respecting others and sharing our gifts and possessions with each other. Through Him we are born, with Him we live and in Him we die. We are also called to receive the sacraments, to pray and to fast. This means: 1. receiving the Eucharist regularly [at least once a week], 2. living prayerful lives by reading the Bible, daily contemplation and communicating through our actions, 3. by regularly asking for forgiveness of our failings and repenting for any harm we may have caused. We do this so as to receive the grace and faith to live our lives in all its glory. Confirmation is a sacrament that: 1. we receive the Holy Spirit [once only] when we are ready and able to make a commitment, 2. it reaffirms our baptism, and 3. we as individuals become permanent members of the Catholic Church. We therefore accept Christ's call to carry out His mission. The Holy Spirit is the love that connects the Father and Son. So by being Christian, we need to responsibly live our lives on this earth with commitment to love and serve the Lord and those we come in contact with.

I think the Church is asking Australia that we should all follow our faith strongly, however all be respectful and loving with other religions as well. It's very important to not only have love for the people of our own faith, however to share the love between other faiths. The Church is asking us to all come together in times of need, especially at this current moment in time, and to pray for the Church and the people. During tough times, we all really have to unite, and pray for the forgiveness of our sins, and pray for guidance and strength in tough times.

God is asking us to pray more. That means the Church in Australia making available Mass times convenient for people who go to work.

PLENARY COUNCIL SUBMISSION FEBRUARY 2019. First of all I wish to thank the Church for inviting participants to make submissions—it is really appreciated and potentially an act of healing and chance to locate the issues that we need to work on to improve the Church in Australia. With the recent upheaval of the Catholic Church in Australia, namely:

- clerical abuse of innocent children,
- abuse of women both inside and outside the Church,
- denial by the clergy to face up to the consequences of abuse,
- the continued and deliberate cover up by the Church of priests that have abused and the deliberate attempts by the Church to deny justice to the abused,
- the disturbing pattern of moving priests around so they don't have to face up to the abuse or justice for what they enacted,
- the continued abuse in other parishes from Church mismanagement,
- illegal cover up by local bishops and representatives of abuser priests,
- shocking mistreatment of the Church of the abused,

- continued denial of women to be accepted as equals in the Church,
- continued denial of gay people/couples to be accepted as equals in the Church,
- continued deep involvement of the Church in developments involving the destruction of pristine bushland (God’s creation) that sits adjacent to World Heritage National Park—the Church just saw this land (old Seminarian site of St Columba’s property) as an opportunity to clear and make money—as an act of capitalism to establish subdivisions (originally 1500 lots but now reduced to 49- at present) so the Church can make huge profits but leave communities with a poorer place to live (overloaded roads/services putting people in danger from extreme bushfire risk in an area with limited road exits— St Columbus Residential development [ - ])—a site of ancient Aboriginal presence for over 25000 years (open camp sites which will be destroyed by the development)—original archaeology site for Fr [ - ]—A Heritage Property—its qualities which have largely been ignored by the Church (the rear of this property should be given back to become part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage National Park—it should never be developed—it is sacred land. I made submissions to the Church which were ignored and it was only the opposition to thru the local Council that the main thrust for development was rejected but the Church is still relentless in seeking further approvals—many have left the parish over this,
- shocking stories in my own parish of women who had been abused by a counsellor (local Church referred these women to the counsellor through the parish Office) but then turned on by the Church parish representative and accused of flirting with the counsellor—then uses this counsellor to carry out meditation in the parishes (the counsellor wasn’t even properly qualified). Please see my attached file for rest of my story—have also included letter by our bishop, which are relevant to this sharing.

God is asking us to be more tolerant and listen to all people from all countries and walks of life and share our stories. Be patient, gentle and forgiving.

The Catholic priests have got to start addressing the children in kids talk not in great descriptive adjectives and superlatives that children don’t comprehend, let alone some adults, and some of the priests actually think that they’re God and not a servant of God, and when us brainwashed lot go, they will be in real trouble as I couldn’t keep my children or grandchildren in the faith, as I reiterate the priests are so out of touch with children.

\* To be more inclusive to minority groups in our community (LGBTIQ). \* Consider expanding the married diaconate for men and women. \* Re-think the format of the Mass and make it more interactive and enjoyable for all age groups. \*Assist the parishes to have different Masses for different groups. Early Morning Mass for non-singers, late morning Mass for the families and afternoon Mass for the Youth or equivalent model that we can differentiate between for the different groups.

Pope Francis has named 'clericalism' as one of the problems most in need of reform in the Catholic Church and this to me is a must for deep discernment by all those involved in the second session. Will it ever change? Will the clerical culture change to enable priests to view ordination as a commitment to following the ways of Jesus in the reality of life at this time and not as a 'clergy club'—very elite with an exaggerated sense of one's own importance? This is where it should start!! reference used; The Clergy Club by Fr [ - ] (retired)

Change. Surely, God would be saying things cannot continue as they are. Jesus’ ministry and his choice of disciples must inform our present day practice. In fact where there is discrepancy between the gospel and current Church practice, Church practice has to change. Pope Francis living outside the Vatican carries a message here. Perhaps the biggest issue centres around the relationship between the baptised and baptised (ordained). It seems there is a great need to really uncover the implications of Const. on the Liturgy. 7. The presence of Jesus, ‘especially in the Eucharist,’ is not to be devalued. Rather, the presence of Jesus in the word, in the presider, in those gathered needs to be magnified. When the readers read the words of the readings Jesus in made present just as when the priest says the words of consecration Jesus is present, and so on. This is especially the case for those gathered in his name: the Body of Christ. As the baptised, we make Jesus present. It is the

overwhelming emphasis from the Church on Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, that contributes to the exalted status of the ordained, the spoken of 'ontological' difference. Clericalism, rightly condemned by Pope Francis, has been the power that has maintained the exalted status of the baptised (ordained). The concept is not to be found in the Christian Sacred Writings. Another significant change to the baptised has seen the increased knowledge of word and tradition. Catholic schools, and other agencies, have developed this large body of laity, qualified, informed, trained in catechesis, and most aware of Church politics. There is leadership here. It is a measure of the ingrained intransigence of Church leadership that this potential is seen by many of the baptised (ordained) as a threat. In fact, due to the training required by CEOs, many baptised have more knowledge of theology and scripture than the baptised (ordained), a number of whom do not seem to have studied anything since their seminary training. Privileged to hear the world recognised violinist, Anne Sophie Mutter, play last year, it struck me hard to think what a loss it would be if concert halls the world over banned women from performing. The banning of women from the leadership of the Church, is, in my view, sinful. It seems to me, there is a need to name the philosophy as underpinning Church doctrine and as in need of updating far more than talk about doctrine. The significant contribution of Bernard Lonergan, is one voice arguing convincingly for this. Any philosophy not able to accommodate the fact of change e.g. classical philosophy, cannot effectively be used to underpin the thinking of this century. The tardiness, even incomprehension, of this has led to charges of 'relativism', a watering down of doctrine, etc. What is needed, as Lonergan writes, is a new control of meaning which allows a method to deal with change. Philosophy is the primary problem.

I am not sure about God but I am asking that the Church in Australia needs to be an entity subject to international and local laws. It needs to be of moderate wealth in order to support the infrastructure that it needs to support its Mission in the 21st century; its mission being that of Peter and James and Paul and Barnabas. "Widows" cared for, property to be held in common, laws to be just and applicable to all, feed the hungry, house the homeless, minister to the sick and always charity (a somewhat debased word). Charity is what springs from the heart when listening with compassion. One of the needs of the present century is education, which the Church has always supported; to draw out the best in the pupil as well as impart knowledge. What did Socrates or someone say: Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel. The Church has always done these two things well but as a depository of history it must tell its true history in both schools and seminaries. Speaking of which, celibacy should be an option, married priests or the monastic life and candidates for the priesthood must be given a thorough sex education. We must get rid of the trappings of Greek, Roman and medieval wealth. All traces of clericalism, which also occurs in other organisations, must be weeded out. Sounds as though I would like to remake the Church. Perhaps I would.

We need new ways to reach those who don't understand the faith (Catholics and non-Catholics). Better religious education of children and adults including the Creed, Catechism, Devotion to Our Lady, the Eucharist and the basics of the faith. We need virtues education including human virtues and character formation. The human virtues are the basis of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Ongoing classes for RCIA candidates after they have become Catholics. Those who teach religion should be practising Catholics and trained to do so. There should be a greater sense of community and belonging in our parishes. We should feel more like a family. More outreach to people and embracing people of different cultures. We should be cheerful and joyful apostles. We should be supporting and praying for our priests. We need more Eucharistic Adoration and this should be encouraged by our priests.

Help parish priests have a family life among themselves by giving them a venue to have a get-together weekly so they will not feel alone and they can reinforce each other's commitment to their priestly vocation. The bishop can join them at other times since he is in principle their spiritual father. Perhaps require the priests to attend this get-together at least 6x a quarter so they will not feel guilty that they are having a nice time. Quarterly excursions with the other parish priests will be

very good also for them. Humanly, they need this and Our Lord would like to have his children especially these chosen ones to be very happy here on earth as well as in heaven.

"Go and serve the Lord"... and each other. What does the Church need to do to encourage this? Provide a clear path to the faith. Please see submission attached "Plenary Submission [ - ].pdf"

Faithfulness to the teachings of Christ and the Church. Not to become politically correct and not to lower the moral and ethical bar. Be demanding as the Catholic Church is a tough Church to live in but a great Church to die in. Encourage all the faithful to go to regular confession, daily Mass, pray the family rosary and pray daily and if possible in front of the Blessed sacrament. Follow the example of great saints such as Fulton Sheen, St Teresa and others in their love and devotion to the Blessed Eucharist and commitment to Church teachings. Do not be afraid to be demanding especially with young people. They want and need direction. They need strong and united leaders. Be transparent in the misgivings and punishments of individuals in the Church who have/are causing scandal. Remind the faithful that their relationship with God is not contingent on the behaviour of others but on their own personal relationship with God Himself.

\* No different to any other time in the past—to get to heaven by living a life of holiness. \* Be faithful to the truth. \* To be better formed in the catechism. \* To know clearly what Jesus teaches. \* To renew our zeal for the Eucharist, to hold Eucharistic processions through the schools, streets, cities. \* To build strong faith-filled communities. \* To better support each other through every stage of life. \* To have pre and post marriage support. \* To have mentors for each stage of life. \* To provide support for young families through family groups, talks, prayer groups, babysitting. \* To have strong family traditions e.g. Sunday Mass weekly, rosaries, First Friday devotions, First Saturday devotions. \* Sunday school after Mass for kids of all ages through to grandparents. \* More welcoming at all parishes. \* More admin support for priests and Religious so they can be more available to personally be present at community events. \* To have Eucharistic adoration every day of the week and devote each day to a specific cause e.g. for vocations, for the Pope and the Church, for families, for the unborn, for the sick, for the holy souls in purgatory. \* Support groups for those who are experiencing same sex attraction as well as their families—helping them to seek God’s call to true masculinity and femininity, that everyone is called to live chastely in accordance with God’s will. \* Life is to be protected no matter what age and that all life comes from God. \* Hold family conferences annually in each diocese to provide support for families at all stages of life. \* To ensure that there are specifically trained, practising Catholics as specialist Religious Education teachers in all Catholic schools (as opposed to specialist Sport, Art, Music teachers and non-practising/non-religious classroom teachers teaching RE in the classroom). \* To ensure students in Catholic schools attend weekly Mass and regular confession, hear the Angelus bells ring. \* To use the parish bulletin to transmit true Catholic teaching and links to good sites and books. \* To make use of social media and multimedia (e.g. podcasts, vlogs, etc.) to help the faithful access good Catholic formation regularly.

This is my second attempt and I feel I did not finish my earlier submission with the respect, thankfulness to you who are bringing this together for all of us. Thank you. There are many facets of life, what to say, what not to say. Catholic in my dictionary means universal, what we all share. So that is: God, Father, Universe, Mother Earth—that’s why they always clothed her in blue and white, Our Lady is alive and very special and making soul for the universe, Holy Sun for there would be no life only for Him, and that darling little Moon with the baby face looking though at us on Earth, a Family. God is all around us in every atom and particle and knows everything. Our bodies are organic but our spirits go on to where ever God sends us. Most people are interested Death, if they were to see how life renews itself all the time. To go to heaven you need to be born and die to get there. Everyone is a sacred heart like Our Lord Jesus, it how you treat each other. Jesus is the only one who speaks of everlasting life. In the old testament it was an eye for an eye, Jesus changed all of that with the forgiveness and asks all for us the live that way. We are all God’s Children. Please may the priest marry, we need them out here in the community more socially. Thank you again for letting me voice my opinion in my bias. I Thank Our Lord Jesus for the understanding and his Love always.

That the Catholic Church in Australia remains Catholic—faithful and united to the universal Church, the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Pope, and for it to stand firm to uphold and defend human life and dignity of human beings as intended by Our Lord.

Spiritual love to mankind Unity will sprout and peace on earth will prevail. Love like a blind who cling to anyone with trust that GOD will never fail. Take everything your heart can bear to attain love and peace in this world. A bit of this, a bit of that one day you smile because your natural love works to build mountain of goodness. Never give up when gloomy days run your way. Just to talk to HIM and suddenly you woke up following the right path. Always remember LOVE is the right way towards HIM. Lord JESUS CHRIST is happy. HE bestows you everything. If there is LOVE, UNITY will follow, then end results is PEACE to the whole world.

I think God is asking us to respect our tradition and give more reverence to Him. To work on our holiness and participate in the work of evangelisation by giving faith formation to every parish. To learn and re learn the message of the Gospel to help us to be a better Catholic in words, thoughts and deeds. Accepting that we are all commissioned to evangelise and spread the Good news. From being stagnant and maintenance to a mission heart.

This I Believe Fear is the root of all evil. What we fear, we will hate, if the fear is not examined to find the root causes of it. How do I stand in the presence of this fear of mine? Who gives me the courage to face and address these fears? Jesus is asking us to trust his life's journey, from a vibrant life that led to his death to the hope found in his resurrection. "Be not afraid." "I have come that you might have life, abundant life." What fears are found in the Church and what is God asking of us in order to address these fears? Then what posture could we take in order to address these fears? 1. For Fear of loss of control.....Listen humbly; Heart-felt Prayer. Trust what God trusts—the People of God Incarnate. 2. For Fear of the Spirit of God and the surprises that come with trusting the new life in the People of God.....Trust in God; Trust in God's presence in the People of God. Listen; Ask questions. Read poetry. 3 For Fear of creativity; inability to imagine; longing for "the good old days.".....Let our prayer be from our own language not a translation of Latin. Let the joy of the Love of God be evident in our liturgies. 4 For Fear of women.....Ask questions; Make friends: Share a meal. Trust the Spirit's movement in our times. Women's energy is desperately needed on all levels of Church life. We are vital to the message of love that God has revealed to us. Trust us as God trusts us. 5 for Fear of LGBTQ people.....Our brothers and sisters have these experiences. Talk to them with open hearts. Hear their stories of bullying. Listen. Do not judge what you do not know. Do not exclude what God has made. 6 For Fear on Muslims; immigrants, people of colour, Indigenous people.....We can learn so much from different cultures, especially now when there is so much violence done to them. Hear the cries of the poor. Share a meal; more than once. 7 For Fear of Vatican II.....It is now 50+ years since Vatican II, as legitimate a work of the Spirit of God as any other such gathering. Why do you not trust what has been so life-giving? It has required us to grow into adult members of the Body of Christ; adults who were formed as children and have grown into believing that God trusts us to be the presence of God in our time and place. We now trust what God trusts. Many of us have as much education and life experiences in ministry as most clerics in this Church that we love, and we continue our formation lovingly and willingly.

"What is God asking of us at this time?" A good measure to see how the Church is going in Australia is to ask this question of both my husband and myself. You will get two very different answers. He will say "God is asking us to be more loving". If you ask him what loving means, it will translate to "nice". And in practice it means welcoming his sister living in a lesbian relationship. Cohabiting friends? Send them a housewarming gift. Go to Mass to honour God? No need because God is nice and he doesn't require your presence at a boring one hour sideshow. I was exactly like him. Until in my mid 20s when I met some Catholic people my own age who gently told me a few little gems I hadn't heard while I was in 12 years of Catholic school. Like encyclicals. Like liturgical beauty. Salvation history. Augustine, Aquinas, Doctors. Like TRUTH. And before anyone thinks "oh one of those", I've spent a year in India helping the poor, don't buy anything new because I hate the fact we consume so much mindlessly and am a vegetarian. So I do all the fashionable things that modern

Catholics are meant to do too. You taught me well. Let me tell you something. The schools are NOT Catholic. They're filled to the gills with people who know NOTHING about the faith. I know my RE teacher didn't and she felt really bad that she was teaching a subject that she had not a clue about. The Masses are a MESS. I remember for the duration of my schooling at Sacred Heart College Sorrento singing pop songs like "I Can See Clearly Now". Mass in most parishes is a circus. No wonder my husband just wants to be nice and thinks God's a dude in the sky who magics good stuff on you every now and again. If you ask me what God is asking of Australia at this time, it's to just be CATHOLIC again and watch the beauty unfold. What is so appealing about this weak sham of an ideology that the modern Church wants to put on for itself, I don't know. I lived it and it was lame.

I believe strongly as a participating Catholic that God wants the Church, us all, to reach out with mercy, love, compassion to those in need around us, and to be heard as Church when things are wrong, e.g. in the most pitiful treatment of our brothers and sisters who are languishing in detention centres in Nauru and Manus Island. People are lost in their views about such people as the secular view is that they need to be detained, when Jesus would surely welcome them. God would surely want us to show compassion to not only refugees and asylum seekers, but towards the homeless, the Indigenous peoples, homosexuals (who do not choose their sexual preferences as many struggle and I know this because of some people I know who have found the Church to be too rigid and judgemental so walk away). We are the Church, and need guidance and direction from those who have some authority in the Church, i.e. the Clerics, but we should not give them absolute power as in the past (and recent past) which has caused us to lose our way. Power has corrupted our Church sadly. I think God wants us to be balanced in our leadership, and this brings me to the position of women in the Church. WE do not necessarily need women to be priests but rather that all people, men, women, clerics, lay people need to have a less hierarchical structure for decision making and pastoral care of the congregations. My belief is that our Churches need to be less sacramental in the formal sense and be a sign of love, forgiveness, fellowship in less formal gatherings, like the early Christians who gathered to break open the Word and break bread together. I am passionate about the Church and believe that the Spirit is guiding us, that we need to be humble together, to listen to one another, to be less "learned in the rituals and traditions of the past, the man-made structures" and focus on the Gospels, help people understand what the Gospels are asking of us. When I was at school in the 1960s I was an active part of the Young Christian Students movement where we read the scriptures and applied it to our lives, a wonderful way to be Christian in our world. I think especially young people, but all people, need this more simplified way of hearing what God is saying and being able to go out to evangelise, to love and bring about Christ's mission, to be sacramental, or a sign in this way rather than in the formal sacramental liturgies that really don't have lasting impact on children or their families, i.e. First Communion might be a great celebration but once the day is over, the children and families disappear, however, I do not want to judge their intentions and that the Spirit is at work at this time. We just need more relevant ways to reach out to them.

I feel like God wants His children to know deeper His love for them. I feel like there needs to be more opportunities for faith formation, so that the faithful can learn about all the beauty, truth and goodness that our Faith holds. This will make Catholics appreciate their Faith more and draw them closer to God (I say this from experience). I feel pre-marriage courses should be more precise (straight to the point about the Church's beautiful teachings on marital love) and infused with the teachings of the Theology of the Body—enabling couples to know the immorality of things like contraception, IVF, etc. and their call to be an image of God's Love. I believe teachers in Catholic schools need to be Catholics grounded in their Faith, not just accepted by obtaining a degree in theology, but also having received the sacraments and practice their Faith. I believe there should be more opportunities for faith formation of our teachers in Catholic schools, as this is necessary for the children in their care to grow in our Faith. It'd be nice to see more retreats and youths events, to allow young people to encounter God's love and set them on fire with Love for Him, giving them the strength and grace to lead the Church strongly in the future. Adoration should be more easily accessible and frequently available in churches. I also don't agree the teachings of the Church being

watered down when being preached for the sake of trying to please those listening e.g. scripture teachers and priests (during homilies) should be allowed to talk about the reality of the devil and hell. I believe that truth of our faith needs to be proclaimed in its wholeness, of course at the level of understanding of those listening, but there shouldn't be restrictions on talking about certain topics of our Faith.

Undoubtedly, the Plenary Council is set to consider many practical matters—and these are important—but the top priority for the Australian Church at this time is a thorough-going spiritual renewal. First, it needs to be recognised that renewal is not something we can bring about ourselves. Only God can renew His Church; our part is to co-operate with the work of the Spirit. We can make a start by recognising the present malaise of the Church in Australia. This calls for a detailed analysis of all wrongs and hurts affecting the Church and all her faithful. Abuses must not be dismissed as only the fault of the perpetrators. We have all shared in the sins of the wrong-doers, as we all share in the Body of Christ. Even passively, or unknowingly, we have allowed a culture to grow in which bad things could happen and be covered up. There is a structural sin affecting the Church of today and we are all responsible. And if such an admission cannot be countenanced by our leadership, then at least we must be moved by the griefs of those who are suffering, and surely not let them be abandoned in their grief. In the language of Alcoholics Anonymous we must recognise that we have reached “rock bottom”, that we are utterly powerless to right ourselves and we look to a Power greater than ourselves. One might say, “But don't we, as a Church, by its nature, always seek power greater than ourselves?” Yes, we do; but do we do so with the frame of heart and mind that a DEEP sense of powerlessness can facilitate? That is the urgency that the Plenary Council should consider to adopt. Following the lead of Pope Francis, we need to entrust ourselves to the mercy of God and let God's healing power do its work. Sure, deep listening, dialogue and discernment will be called for to execute the purpose of a plenary council, but a foundation, as suggested above, is what is imperative before any decisions can be reached. So the opportunity of the Plenary Council is for the Australian Church to make a public act of repentance in the name of all her children. In doing this we can be sure of God's response in renewing God's People. With what Charismatics call “expectant faith”, we beg the Holy Spirit to fill us, as a new Pentecost. One might hope that in the atmosphere of general reconciliation those who have suffered sexual abuse in our Church and other organizations might find healing in being able to forgive those who have wronged them. Until they can come to forgiveness, they remain victims, the hurt persists, which no amount of apology can relieve. But is our Church—leaders and the faithful—“big enough” to humble itself and ADMIT to its powerlessness and ask for forgiveness, not just apologise?

Please see attached submission, sent to me anonymously through the Christmas Card campaign in my parish, and summarised here: God is asking the Church in Australia to do something, quickly and now, about CLIMATE CHANGE. To stay relevant with the young then big efforts must be made, starting at parish level, to alleviate carbon emissions and keep warming to 1.5degC. Each parish could begin with simple things such as : Banning single use plastic bags, Separating rubbish and recycling more, Installing water tanks for cleaning and watering, Installing PV panels to offset emissions and electricity costs, Installing PV panels on school rooftops, Encourage parishioners to be more involved in local tree planting and bush regeneration projects as part of their mission. Walk to Mass more often. We are running out of time! What we do now matters more than ever.

I believe God is asking us to listen to the voices of people who are not engaged with our Church. Not because they don't wish to be but because they care about people, issues, expectations and situations that are not supported by Church teaching and its leaders but also some of our own staunch people of God. Some will never understand the teachings of the Church, no matter which way we might try and articulate it, so we need to find ways of addressing this before it's too late or we have done too much damage to people's chances of being in relationship with God and Church again.

1. I work at a school where we are blessed to have a chapel and Mass every day. I take care of the chapel and for the last 3 years have been trying in vain to substitute our torn and over used

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| <p>lectionary. I believe that the Gospel deserves more respect! I think God is asking of the Church to remain true to Jesus' teachings. While the Catholic Church is for all, we cannot be pressured to change to appear more 'modern'.</p>   |
| <p>With the turbulence of nature around us and the impact on peoples' lives I think God is asking us to be more compassionate toward others. The kindly attitude, the acknowledgment of known persons and strangers assists in creating a more inclusive and compassionate environment.</p>   |
| <p>I believe God is asking us to be strong in our conviction to stand by the moral values of the Catholic Church in the midst of all the activities that are trying to destroy it such as the legalisation of same sex marriage and abortion as well as the transgressions that are happening within the officials of the Church.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking us to set an example to non-believers by living his messages. Australia unfortunately has headed down the same track as most Western civilization. Many are blinded by the media and whatever is popular at the time. They have forgotten God and his basic teaching of love and simplicity. It is the role of the Catholic Church to bring this teaching back on the agenda in a way that will strike the hearts of not only those who already know this but to the wider Australian population (i.e. lapsed Catholics, agnostics and atheist). The Hillsong congregation have a great method of encouraging people to join their congregation. They are open, inviting and administer the gospel in a way people relate too. The Catholic Church on the other hand, seems to teach the gospels as if we are still in the dark ages. I am not saying, the Hillsong method is the correct way, however a dialogue where the gospel message is heard, remembered and acted upon must be at the forefront of the Catholic Church in Australia.</p>   |
| <p>Maybe God is asking Australians to say it like IT IS! Individuals, groups and parishes already DO A LOT of good among the people, the poor and needy and refugees. There's a Great Faith and willingness and love in thousands of Catholics on the ground. Obviously, there is now a great chasm between the Catholic Church and non-Church going Catholics. It is EXTREMELY LATE to ask us what God wants FOR US to do. START FROM THE TOP! Go back and be like Jesus, kind, loving, poor, simple, humble, forgiving and HONEST. Enough of what bishops want, they have deceived, covered up, bluffed, lied and molested, and THAT'S what the world sees. So Church, go back to your roots and be poor and simple and honest from the very top!</p>   |
| <p>1) Reach out to the external world outside the Church. We need to look outwards more to the needy. This is not just about expanding Centacare which does excellent work but to emphasise more strongly that the Church is not about spiritual ritual alone but about engaging with the marginalised sections of our community. This should receive equal importance with going to Mass on Sunday and includes visiting the sick and aged, assisting the needy including the poor, etc. 2) Be more inclusive. More tolerance towards sections of the community that have felt isolated from the Church e.g. divorcees, LGBTI people. 3) Redefine the role of the clergy and Church leadership Lay people should be encouraged to take up leadership roles and the Church should actively seek to engage with the laity. This is not just to carry out the work of deacons, etc., but for other works including administration, pastoral, property, finance, communication, youths, etc. The role of the clergy needs to focus on areas that require specialised training in the seminary, etc. 4) Strong focus on engaging with youths. This is the weakest part of the Church today. A quick scan of any parish Bulletin indicates that most of the activities planned are for adults and in particular for those that are already engaged with the Church. This area requires almost a war like response from the Church if it is to survive. Having Youth meetings focussed on prayer and meditation is NOT THE ANSWER. The Church needs to examine its communication, preparation for the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation (currently left to parents most of whom do not go to Church themselves). Dioceses should make this the MOST IMPORTANT focus area for each bishop who should be directly involved in managing this. 5) Share good news stories—counter negative media coverage. Today all we hear are stories about sexual excesses by the clergy, Catholic schools grabbing more than their fair share of funding, etc. The Church does a lot of good work. Not enough is shared within the Church let alone outside. This is not about PR but for people within and outside the Church to find meaning</p> |

and ne attracted to the Word and Work of God. 6) Better communication. In an era of audio-visual communication, 17 and 20-minute-long sermons are just not on. You lose people who would rather not come for Mass. Training for better oral and written communication is important. 7) Reduce the obsession with ritual. If the Church spent even one-tenth of its energy and resources that it spends on marginal changes to liturgy, on making the Church more welcome, encouraging dialogue, carrying out works etc., it will be seen as being more welcoming.

- We need to increase our awareness that Jesus Christ is truly present in the tabernacles of our Churches. Therefore, we need to increase our reverence by taking care of dressing with more refinement, taking more pride in our appearance, making a good genuflection when we enter and leave the Church as sign of our due respect and love for our Lord's presence.
- Further to the previous point, to increase our refinement with our Lord, it would be good that also receive Him in communion with better preparation. Therefore, there needs to be more of an emphasis on the sacrament of confession. To begin to encourage a culture of confession, it needs to be more readily available for more than half an hour per duration. The time slots need to be announced with regularity and publicised more in bulletins and announcements.
- The faithful and the clergy need to understand spiritual direction and its value in helping us grow to be better Catholics and in our relationship with Christ. It would be good if it was readily available, for example, after one has gone to confession where one asks for advice about something they may need guidance on.
- More opportunities need to be more available for community service and service projects as a means to give back to society. Examples of community service include hospital visits, nursing home visits and going overseas for a project to help a disadvantaged community in need. Community service is a means to help others to become more selfless and to think more about the others. When one is selfless, one is able to find their vocation and one is able to be more generous with what God wants of them.
- The parishes can provide doctrine classes where people can attend to learn more about the faith. The doctrine classes can explain facts about the Catholic Church and their teachings but the classes can also inform of ways to live out virtues and ways to pray so one can grow deeper in their knowledge and relationship with Christ. The doctrine classes also need to emphasise why modesty and chastity is important in our relationships. There are many stigmas with Catholicism and chastity—that they restrict the freedom of people in relationships but in fact, chastity teaches us to love in a wholesome way.
- We need to encourage Catholics to be more apostolic and helping others discover Christ and His love for them. How to be apostolic can be addressed in homilies, doctrine classes, meetings and gatherings amongst Catholics. Apostolate can be done in word but also in deed—in our upright example of how one lives their life.
- Scripture classes in schools need to be taught in a more lively, interactive and relatable way without watering down the truths of the Catholic faith. We can try to move away from a textbook and traditional classroom setting so students don't view the classes as just another subject in school but is something that can help them with life.

A return to the sacraments through the liturgies. Traditional Liturgies that use music, incense, bells, candles and sacred vestments to highlight the awe and significance of the liturgies and sacraments. A connection between youths, the young and the parishes—hear their need for sacrament, formation, and solemn liturgies. Many young people lack a basic understanding of their faith—consider the parish, home and school formation of the faith and return to basics through the catechism and Bible. Greater protection of our priests and their wellbeing, especially as they are victimised for simply being a priest. Greater collaboration between neighbouring parishes in sharing liturgies and events. The young are feeling disconnected from the Church and guidance of priests and youths leaders due to strict child protection regulations. Limit the over-protective requirements to allow greater connection between youths and priests. The lay people have too much power in the Church, meaning less respect to clergy, religious and the faith. Let the laity be followers of the faith, not leaders of it!

To keep our faith basic and the centre to our changing world. Not change our ways just because gay people have been influenced the wrong way and now want to appear they are in the right. Also

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| <p>uphold our faith with respect and not give in the other religions. Unity and peace amongst our own Church with one common goal and purpose.</p>  |
| <p>I think God is asking the Church to stand as a sign of contradiction to the world, particularly in proclaiming her traditional teachings on morality and the social Kingship of Christ. Bishops and priests should preach on the hard teachings in regard to mortal sin and death, hell and judgment so as to not be derelict in their duty to save souls. They also cannot be passive, or worse, supportive, towards civil laws and policies, which are opposed to the Church's teaching on human sexuality or the value of human life. Further to this, the faithful must be formed in the doctrines and practices of the Church so as to be effective witnesses to Christ and his Church in the world. Parishes must be equipped to support parents in educating their children in the faith, as is their solemn responsibility, and Catholic schools need to have a culture of Catholic practice in their very fabric, not merely as a veneer which does not transform their secular curriculum and structure. Greater reverence and adherence to the rubrics in liturgy, especially the Mass, should be implemented. Priests and those who assist in the celebration of the Mass should be given instruction and resources to perform their tasks in the manner most pleasing to God as defined by the popes and councils. Greater opportunity for priests and seminarians to learn the Tridentine liturgy should be made available and the faithful should be encouraged to become familiar with both forms of the Mass. Traditional teaching and practice has been shown throughout the world to promote flourishing of Catholic life; the Church in Australia needs to embrace this reality and revitalise its practice to draw people to the one true faith which can offer salvation.</p>  |
| <p>I believe God is asking us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To renew Christianity in Australia by re-educating Catholic Christians in the true teachings of His Church.</li> <li>• To listen attentively to Him in personal prayer, by learning how to pray through speaking and listening.</li> <li>• To understand and appreciate the treasures to be found in the Catholic Church—a few examples...             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Each of the sacraments and the life of grace.</li> <li>§ Access to the Word and thought of God in the Gospels.</li> <li>§ The value of the priesthood.</li> <li>§ Instruction and guidance in faith, in family life, in marriage, in values, in social teaching, etc.</li> <li>§ The blessings of heroic lives of so many people over time.</li> <li>§ Care for peoples who are marginalised, who are needy, and who are helpless.</li> <li>§ The parish community.</li> <li>§ The various charisms of each of the current and recent past Popes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To be active in the New Evangelisation starting with our own families, across all generations to keep them in or to bring them back to the Faith.</li> <li>• To pass on the Faith through developing a “Catholic culture” in the family and in the parish through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ good books, good audios, good films, § family devotions and traditions focussed around the Church’s year,</li> <li>§ catechesis for adults, young people and children,</li> <li>§ social media connection in the parish community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To see what each family and each parish can do to encourage and foster more priestly vocations.</li> <li>• To maximise the value of the resources and the social impact of the Australian Catholic School system, for example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ By developing regular catechesis classes for groups of Catholics of all ages.</li> <li>§ By networking between schools which have more resources and those with fewer resources.</li> <li>§ By vigorously promoting the individual and social value of a Faith-based education.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p>The importance of Uniformity within the Catholic Church. Drawing on my personal experience—of being born in the Sudan into a staunch Catholic family, attending Catholic school, then gradually allowing myself during my twenties to slip away from practicing my faith, and then starting once more to practice my faith in my mid 30s—Getting married and becoming a father—Starting and running my own business—Having regular contact with members of Orthodox Churches who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church.—Giving spiritual talks to groups of like-minded men for the last 5 years.</p>   |
| <p>Be more open and accepting of gay and lesbian people in the Church. Priests should be able to be married and be either men or women. The Church needs to be more relevant to people’s lives and perhaps rules and regulations from 2000 years ago need to be reviewed for today's world and people.</p>  |
| <p>2) Practical considerations for promoting interreligious dialogue through the Church,<br/>a. Structural,</p>   |

- i. We suggest a serious top-down consideration of the structures of the Church in Australia to better support interfaith dialogue. In this, we ask our bishops to engage and consult the community as part of the process.
- ii. We ask that the Dioceses establish Ecumenical and Interfaith Commissions where they are not already present. These would provide a platform for the education and formation of Catholics in the skills and teachings of interreligious dialogue and thereby lead to a more rigorous engagement with followers of differing faiths.
- iii. We suggest that ecumenical and interfaith dialogue be recognised together in a whole way, rather than as separate considerations. De facto, it is customary in Australia for Christians of other denominations to attend interreligious events. In principle, for public representation at interreligious events, there should be a single Christian spokesperson, rather than a Catholic one and an Anglican one and a Uniting one. In other words, even though their purposes are different, interfaith and ecumenism go hand-in-hand.
- iv. We suggest consulting with leaders of various religions on the structures and facilitation of different forms of advocacy on justice issues, particularly as local social-justice groups have changed and declined over the decades.
- v. That structures include a greater percentage of women, ideally 50 per cent, in official interfaith dialogues, sponsored by the Church.

b. Education,

- i. We consider education key in better supporting and promoting interfaith dialogue in the Church. We ask that the Church's rich teaching on interreligious dialogue developed during the last 60 years be actively promoted at all levels, from seminaries, to catechetics, adult education, and the parish.
- ii. We suggest opportunities for young people to study and prepare for work in interfaith relations in Church and society through scholarships offered by the Dioceses and Catholic institutions.
- iii. For education (and structures for that matter) in interfaith to include teaching of issues that impact women. For example, investigating religious teachings that can lead to violence against women and the violation of their human rights.

c. Communication,

- i. We ask that the Church broaden communication to reassure Catholics that to open to others in their faiths is not a betrayal but is in fact fulfilling the mission of the Church. We quote, (RM, 55). (DP, 38).
- ii. That all Catholics, especially the lay faithful who live and work in our multi-religious Australian society, be encouraged to engage with believers from other religions as an integral part of living out their faith (RM, 57). "All Christians are called to be personally involved in these two ways of carrying out the one mission of the Church, namely proclamation and dialogue" (DP, 82).
- iii. That we develop a language that speaks of positive relations between faiths.

To be a welcoming Church, accepting that the lifestyle of Australians in 2019 is very different to what it was in past decades. Why do some parishes ask for a baptism and, often, a confirmation certificate for a person to be a godparent? Can't we trust that a person has been baptised if they say they are? Does the confirmation certificate make them a better person? Why do priests insist on a confirmation certificate for a person to marry as a Catholic in the Church? Was it their fault they were not confirmed as a child? Are they less of a Catholic? Are we encouraging them to marry in the Church or putting up barriers that are often too hard to pass? If a person has been married and divorced then wishes to become Catholic, why are they turned away? Who are we to judge their lives? We only seem to welcome people who can tick all the right boxes; produce the right pieces of paper; fit in with our idea of what a 'good Catholic' should be. We have taken sacramental programs out of the Catholic schools and made them parish based, making it hard for many families to turn up for lessons in the evening or weekend, week after week, often for many months at a time. Those with large families or who are single parents struggle to attend these programs. And what if they don't? Does their child miss out on a place in high school, be refused the right to be a Godparent, have to 'jump through hoops' for the right to be married in the Catholic Church? How can we say we

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| <p>are a welcoming Church, encouraging adults to join, but only offering a program called RCIA which is a very long, arduous process? In other words, if you want to join this 'exclusive club', if you want to worship God in our Church building, get baptised as a baby or, if an adult, be prepared to be scrutinised and processed.</p>   |
| <p>To live in harmony with everyone, not just in Australia but across the world. Practice empathy, compassion, kindness, tolerance and understanding without judgement.</p>  |
| <p>I am very connected to God through the Bible. The main things which I see God asking of us in Australia, which I don't see in the Catholic Church is the ordination of Women, and the marriage of priests. Both of these topics are presented to us by God in the Bible. God instructs priests to be faithful to their wives. In the Gospel of Mark, it seems Mark isn't forced by cultural norms to omit Women from his recount of the events, but rather he given an accurate recount involving women as a central part of the beginnings of the Christian Church. One of the biggest indicators that God is happy for Women to be central to the Church, is when Mary Magdalene was chosen by God to be the first person to see that Christ had risen from the dead.</p> |
| <p>Solidarity and synodality in a Communion theology based on the Council Fathers of Vatican II. This changes the culture of clericalism and opens a hermeneutical model of radical inclusion, restoration and accompaniment listening to the signs of the times. The Holy Spirit is no longer gently calling us but is a voice crying in the wilderness. The Church under the leadership of Francis and bishops of the same hearing must understand this critical time and to be critical yeast with the People of God in loving and compassionate change. God is calling are we truly listening?</p>   |
| <p>I think God is asking the Catholics in Australia to seek formation and understanding of our faith so that we can live it well and strongly. Today we are lacking the input and education to preserve our faith and pass it on to younger generations.</p>   |
| <p>At this time, I feel that God is asking Australia to purge itself from all the wrongs that have been done by the clergy within the Church, especially to children who have been molested. All paedophile clergy need to be found and weeded out. By purging, the Church will purify itself in order to be ready when the time comes for the second coming. I also feel that God wants Australia to turn back to him, he is not very happy about what is going on down here and if we do not change our ways when the time comes we will feel the wrath of God.</p>  |
| <p>Renew faith and read Bible.</p>   |
| <p>I think God is asking us to share the gift of faith with others, to share our personal gifts generously within the Church and for the sake of the world and to open up the gift of our communities to the world and society around us. I think God is asking us to consider a newcomer's experience to our parishes, groups and communities: what would they experience coming here? I think God is asking us to be creative in how we get out more into the community to share what we have with others. I think God is asking us to be drawn deeper into his love and to draw others into his loving and transforming heart.</p>  |
| <p>More vigilant about Satan lies and deceit. Reminding about little prayers even when busy (e.g. bus, train, walking at work, etc.) More hours devoted to confession, family rosary, reverence in taking holy communion, reverence in the Church premise, importance of adoration for peace of soul and holiness in one's being. Modesty. Priests to participate in adorations as encouragement to parishioners from time to time. Bring back family together. Family Day Retreats Family rosary. Catholic leaders involved in Catholic schools. Encourage priests to do Latin Masses. More talk on deliverance and how faith can help with depression as e.g. ...</p>  |
| <p>To provide high quality culturalisation programs, pastoral supervision, mentoring and ongoing formation and performance appraisal for the overseas priests now being incardinated into our dioceses and religious orders.</p>   |
| <p>I believe God is asking us to be more vulnerable and support each other better. We as a Church need to do better us reaching out to the lonely, vulnerable and those on the outer of society. God wants us to search ourselves for how we can change Australia and how we can be community to all those we meet.</p>  |

This feedback from a group of Catholic teenagers (aged between 12 and 15) who attended the Disciples of Jesus Summer School of Evangelisation in January 2019. • Homilies from the heart, with conviction—it's obvious when a priest means what he says. And if he's looking bored himself, how can we be enthusiastic? • More charismatic Masses—we think every Mass should be like this! • New songs (still playing lots of older songs). • Respect tradition but modernise the songs where possible. • Some Churches have adoration chapels, which we would use if our Church had one! • Stronger youths groups. Not many people going to youths groups. Some people go for the wrong reasons. Youth leaders need to be trained by people who know about youths ministry—NOT by the parish priest!! • Good to have flexibility with youths group activities/events. • Advertise events like this Summer School in the parishes—some parish priests will only advertise things that are run by the parish and they are not very interesting for us! • Reconciliation should be available more often, at times when young people can attend—Saturdays are hard cos a lot of us have sport. • Make Easter and Christmas Masses as good and inclusive as possible to encourage those people who only come at those Masses to come more often, and advertise follow-up events. • Have food/drink after Mass. • Have more "Family" Masses (kids involved in ministries. E.g. music). • Really long Masses can be a turn off, unless it is engaging (e.g. good music, homily, etc.). • Try to have music at all Masses. • More young altar servers. • More formation and teaching needed for the Mass/Eucharist for young people. • Make homilies more relatable and understandable. Personal sharing-style stories are good. • Improved public speaking skills for priests—lots of priests are hard to understand or don't have good speaking skills so it's easy to tune out. • More Indigenous music. • Sing the Our Father more often. • Having families and youths committed to and enthusiastic about Mass will be an encouragement to other families and young people. • More instruments at Mass. • Having parish choirs who are not musically gifted (e.g. not singing in tune, or not keeping time, etc.) does not encourage worship during the Mass. It is very distracting and off-putting. Readers have to be able to read well at Mass—so singers and musicians should also have to be skilled and not just there because they want to do it!! • Listen to us and don't just expect us to do the same things older people do—we are not the same generation and we have good ideas too! Don't assume we don't know much about God just because we're young. • Sometimes we find Mass really boring because it's hard to relate to the language used. It's not the way we speak so it makes Mass very disconnected from the rest of our lives.

1. Science and the New Cosmology has broadened and deepened our knowledge of who God is, what God is like and who we are. These areas of knowledge are giving us another whole worldview that has been lost over time in many quarters, especially within the Institutional Church. In fact elements of this science are showing how all of creation is interconnected, interwoven, especially the evolutionary aspect of this knowledge. This new worldview must be incorporated into the Eucharistic liturgy. My very strong sense is that God would want this aspect to be much more strongly listened to and incorporated. 2. God must be calling out, in my perception and discernment of matters, for the Eucharistic liturgy, which is so lacking as a modern day experience of community and as a source of nourishment, to be reformed. The language / images about who God is / what God is like is very poor—we rely on the readings often to give us a broader and deeper view of this e.g. a dominance of the distant / Other God compared to the intimate immanent present God. Language that is too tied up with past conflicts in the Church is still dominant. Readings of Scripture are often taken out of context—listen to biblical scholars here about what should be read if it's an excerpt—as it sometimes does not convey the correct or full picture! There is too much emphasis on sin, unworthiness in a negative sense—we have forgotten that creation and the human are essentially good. The liturgy needs to be simplified, vivified and allowed to be more flexible—decentralised from Vatican control. There has been too much emphasis on the Real Presence and on the liturgy as ritual without ensuring that the meaning of the ritual is made known, without making it a real occasion of community building. 3. There needs to be alternative non-Eucharistic liturgies to suit different needs and different age groups. I hear a great need for these in our day. 4. If the institutional Church had always stayed in deep dialogue with its mystics, wisdom teachers and

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| <p>learned men and women, it would be a different Church that we live in today. God in my view must lament this very much. Men like Thomas Merton come to mind. And I know that there are many such voices in Australia that the bishops and priests and any leadership group need to humbly listen to. There are people who know exactly who these people are and they all could be sought out for the wisdom and experience they have learned or been given. These are the people who inspire me. Often, unfortunately, they are not priests or at least, priests of the diocesan mould, with some exceptions. 5. God would also want justice for the bishop in Queensland—Bill Morris—who was sidelined by the Vatican without support from the Australian bishops. This was a great injustice that calls out for redress.</p>   |
| <p>I think God wants us, as Catholics, to be more proactive with regards to social issues like poverty, immigration, abuses of those in authority and those in the clergy, crime, law and order, religious orientation, gender orientation, racial issues, family and domestic violence and issues, public health and job creation. God needs us to speak out and suggest answers and solutions to our politicians and lawmakers not just make generalised comments.</p>  |
| <p>The formation of places and people, with the Church as the site of encounter with the face of Christ at every moment.</p>  |
| <p>1. For the clergy to be of service and true to their vocation. 2. A more balanced representation of women in the Church. 3. For the Church to be a voice for the voiceless. 4. For the Church to redeem itself by living the gospel and share the good stories.</p>  |
| <p>* Be faithful to the truth. * To be better formed in the catechism. * To know clearly what Jesus teaches. * To renew our zeal for the Eucharist. * To build strong faith-filled communities. * To have pre and post marriage support. * To have mentors for each stage of life. * To provide support for young families through family groups, talks, prayer groups, babysitting. * To have strong family traditions e.g. Sunday Mass weekly, rosaries, First Friday and Saturday devotions * Sunday school after Mass for kids of all ages through to grandparents. * More welcoming at all parishes. * More admin support for priests and Religious so they can be more available to personally be present at community events. * Support groups for those who are experiencing same sex attraction as well as their families—helping them to seek God’s call to true masculinity and femininity, that everyone is called to live chastely in accordance with God’s will. * Life is to be protected no matter what age and that all life comes from God. * Hold family conferences annually in each diocese to provide support for families at all stages of life. * To ensure that there are specifically trained, practising Catholics as specialist Religious Education teachers in all Catholic schools (as opposed to specialist Sport, Art, Music teachers and non-practising/non-religious classroom teachers teaching RE in the classroom). * To ensure students in Catholic schools attend weekly Mass and regular confession, hear the Angelus bells ring.</p> |
| <p>Time to spend with God. We are all very busy people, however coming to Church should not be a chore but something which we should be eager to do. Unfortunately, the Church is disconnected, not relatable not keeping up with the times. Sermons can be a drag. It needs to be engaging, interactive and upbeat. People should be drawn to it. If you do not put the effort now, we are going to lose our flock especially the young ones. It is time to change and make ourselves relatable and relevant to initiate willing participation.</p>  |
| <p>To stand up for his Church! To protect its institutions, to protect its followers and to maintain its freedoms provided through the law. I believe God wants Catholics to participate more in life. To stand up for what we believe in. To take action against evil. To stop those who would gladly destroy his Church.</p>  |
| <p>God does not change His Message over time—it is people who change. God's message is found in Christ's teaching as witnessed in the New Testament and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.</p>   |
| <p>I would say that God is asking us to be more faithful to the Gospel, something which is inseparable from our coming to know and love all that the Catholic Church teaches and striving to put it into practice. This should entail the following points: 1. Preaching centred on Jesus Christ as the 'Way, the Truth and the Life'. 2. Fostering devotion to Mary and renewed emphasis on her place in</p>   |

salvation history and in the spiritual life. 3. Increased focus on the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Christian life. 4. Renewed focus the sacrament of Reconciliation as a great gift of the Merciful God and the source of grace necessary for enabling our consciences to become more sensitive to the reality of sin in our world and in our own lives. 5. More preaching on the necessity of the practice of personal prayer as necessary for growth in our relationship with God and the Communion of Saints. 6. Renewed parish-based Catechesis on marriage and Family life to be conducted by people who actually understand and believe what the Church teaches. 7. Encouragement of married couples to be more receptive to the gift of children. 8. Renewed catechesis in the social teaching of the Church—especially in regards to the need to create new economic conditions that will be more responsive to the needs of the poor and of single income families. 9. Fostering greater awareness of the needs of single parent families and of families with members who have disabilities. 10. Fostering a more open and welcoming attitude to refugees and migrants. 11. Renewed catechesis on the origin and nature of the ordained priesthood. Clear explanations of why the ordination of women is impossible. 12. Renewed catechesis on the gift of priestly celibacy. 13. Increased emphasis on the role of grandparents in helping younger married couples live the vocation of marriage according to the teaching of the Church. 14. Make Catholic educational institutions more accountable for ways in which they may have failed to help pass on the faith to younger generations. 15. Cut back on the bureaucratisation of Catholic services and the high salaries being paid to top executives. Read more:

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/bureaucratization.html>

To have greater prepared homilies by priests which have greater doctrine and theology of the Catholic faith.

To strive after holiness. To increase the belief of the faithful in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist by, discouraging unnecessary talking and to facilitate ease of receiving Eucharist on knees for those who want to. Provide education for Church musicians on the teaching on music in the Church as outlined in the documents of Vatican II. To adhere to the Gospel and Church teachings on faith and morals.

I think God is asking our country to be daring in our mission of being apostles. In particularly finding the balance of respect for the freedom of others but firmly grounded in conviction with matters to do with morality and protection of life. Daring too in sharing the invitation to all people to respond to their baptismal calling to a life of virtue and Holiness. And especially reaching our hand out to youths, stepping into their shoes, compassionate towards them and their Paradigms and gently proposing, "Knowing that we all are called by God to live our lives to the fullest, would you like to know what your personal vocation is?" and inviting them to discuss this with Our Lord as a beginning and strengthening of a personal relationship. Doctrine and formation is important. More doctrine classes, theology of the body, formation of all sorts in forming one's conscience and the exercise of one's freedom. This is very important. There is so much ignorance and how detrimental it can be to nurturing one's Faith, which is a gift.

We believe God is calling the Catholics of Australia to return to holiness, like the Israelites of old. At a time when so much negativity surrounds the Church especially as regards clerical abuse and subsequent cover-ups it might be tempting to embrace radical solutions which are often secular in nature. We believe this would be a gross mistake. Priestly and religious formation must lead individuals to a deeper faith and a constant striving for personal holiness. It must never be a numbers game. So many perpetrators of the past showed clear unsuitability for the religious life but it was often wrongly believed that time and a new situation would change character. Clearly history tells us this isn't the case. Anyone with such perverse tendencies must be rejected from religious life. The failure to do so as we now see is catastrophic. But what about women's participation in Church life? While we believe women should have a louder voice in the running of the Church, we don't think they should be ordained. We know that our Lord was radical in his ways and teachings. We also know that he had many women followers; however none were admitted to the office of the twelve. Having said this, we know women have unique gifts and talents and the Church will be richer for

embracing these. In regards to attracting young people to the Church, we believe we must consult those youths already in the Church as to what attracts them to Church. Our own experience with our daughter and son-in-law as well as the young people at our parish leads us to believe that they prefer a traditional style Church—a rock, in these challenging and quickly changing times. They are attracted to holiness and desire formation by solid Church leaders and laity who practice what they preach. Our daughter and her husband have spent much of their teenage and young adult years attending a thriving Maronite youths group, which supported by the parish, often brings in inspirational Catholic speakers as well as organising spiritual retreats. We don't believe we should look to adopt a 'Hillsong' type approach. We are all called to holiness. Let us not be quick to abandon a model that has formed saints and steered us through the last 2000 years.

I think the Church continues to be 'out of touch' with life at the present time and is in danger of becoming more so as time goes by and things remain the same. • We need to 'get back to basics' and support the clergy operating at the parish level. It is here that the Church's best work is being done. There is plenty of good will and charity and willing involvement that largely goes un-noticed. Parishioners supporting each other. Feels good and happy. • The Church needs to get more 'media savvy'. Currently media stories featuring the Catholic Church are all damaging and all result from the action of some clergy to the highest level. The great Mass of Catholics continuing to go to Church on Sundays or during the week are not the ones generating 'bad press' for the Church. • It would be nice to re-engage the youths but I fear this might be a lost cause when their parents can readily see and admit that all is not well within the Church. Youth Groups obviously don't work very often as no priest is able to relate to youths, today, in a way that is meaningful in today's society. Perhaps youths leader training, not organised by the Church but by other professionals, might be able to provide leaders able to supply the balance between the 'spiritual/religion' and the 'worldly reality' of the world in which we live. These new generation leaders would then need to be employed, perhaps shared between a number of parishes to create super youths groups that might have some appeal. • There should be more active prosecution and defrocking of clergy proven to be guilty of 'doing the wrong thing' with either children / other clergy or other knowingly covering it up in order to protect individuals or the Church. This goes right to the top and the Pope has to actively show the way with other than 'talk'. • People today want less pomp and ceremony, less old men wandering about in fancy vestments. Less 'Rome', more concentration on the parish. The Vatican is wealthy but the Church is constantly asking for money from the people. What does the Vatican do with its wealth other than 'grow it'? • The diocese should be supporting the parishes not seeking money from the parishes, money they struggle to pay. Funds collected at the parish level should basically stay there. In the case of the Catholic Foundation, the diocese should tailor its 'programs' to what it can afford, not to what it can bludgeon out of the parishes. There should be less emphasis on 'glossy brochures', e.g. the recent name change from 'DWF' to 'Catholic Foundation' must have cost a lot of money but people still refer to it as the DWF! • The matter of women being admitted to the priesthood should be revisited. Women in the hierarchy would bring a balance lacking at the moment and they couldn't do any worse than the current crop of Church leaders. It would also, possibly, increase the supply of priests but it's difficult to see what the appeal is, to either men or women in the current climate.

God is asking us to live our lives in a really meaningful, faithful manner. We do not live in isolation and if we listen to Christ's message we are given a clear direction to love God and love one another. I am not sure we are doing that, in many ways we often only accept the like-minded response and people. God is asking us to be relevant as a Church community in the present. Much of what we do is not relevant because it is not understood. People are driven from involvement by emphasis on what is liturgically or theologically correct without an explanation of the thinking behind what we do. Jesus came so that we may have life and have it to the full. God is asking that we live not only for the future but in the present and ensure that our lives become fulfilled in a truly Christian manner. We need to be a community that is prepared to reach out because of who we are and what we stand for. In our current world we need to recognise that we can't live in the past and assume the

traditions and culture of the past have to be accepted by members of our faith community. In many cases that alienates rather than attracts people. Our Church needs to be welcoming and willing to promote equality. God is asking us to see that and to evaluate the current structures and roles of both lay and clergy to ensure that we are able to support and journey with all with whom we have contact. We also need to embrace young people where they are. We do that really well in our schools and youths activities (World Youth Day) but they come back to a weary Church that is not attractive to young people. Beyond youths, God is asking us to be relevant to young families, families with older children and so on. As stated, we need to consider how we make God's love known and relevant in word and action. God is asking us all to be Church. Too often the Church is seen as the clergy. We are challenged to recognise that each of us has a role and are very much a part of our Church. Each one of us has to be and lead "the change we desire".

God is asking Australia to accept its fair share of refugees in line with the UN guidelines and to not keep boat people detained in offshore detention centres in unacceptable living conditions. Jesus Christ was a refugee.

To proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. Respond to the call 'to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God.

To be more kind, understanding and charitable to others, especially people who we may not traditionally be sympathetic to. Also, that priests and bishops may marry

A New National Office to Deal with Clericalism in the Church. I think our need to have a national office to deal with clericalism in the Church is overdue. In my experience and lay people, who happen to be employed or appointed to certain significant positions in the Church, seem to have fallen into which temptations too. This national office or body shall be entrusted with tasks such as:

- To provide a guideline for all clergy and Church employees, both paid or volunteer, about what is considered as clerical.
- To deal with complaints from within Australia and follow them up and do something about them.
- To promote a better model of Church and set annoyed all Church free from any form of clericalism or fear.

Rev. [ - ] PP [ - ] [ - ] NSW [ - ]

Plenary Council 2020. 1. No More Abuse. We believe that there should be zero tolerance of criminal offences committed by our priests—those in whom we entrust our faith, our hope, our salvation in our Church. Those people (priests who commit these crimes) should be removed from office and go and try to get help-mental help so they can find a way to redeem themselves. It is an outrage, a great shame, a great suffering for us to live with as we see that these priests belong to the holy order of Melchizedek. The question is how could these priests continue to dare celebrate the Eucharist and then continue to molest children who are defenceless? 2. Women should be more involved and allowed to be involved in all ministries of the Church. We need to encourage and implement the equality of men and women in all ministries of the Church as set out by the examples of Jesus in his life on earth. For example, a woman cannot be an acolyte. She is only known as a senior altar server. Other examples are:

- Most men ordained as permanent deacons are married men.
- Why can't women be allowed to receive formation in the diaconate program? Women excel in areas of care, compassion, charity and commitment.
- These are some of the material qualities of women which will benefit many areas in the Church. Please consider the role of women in the Church.

3. Divorce and reception of Holy Communion. People who are divorced and remarried are not allowed to receive communion unless there is an annulment of their first marriage in the Church. Annulment of the marriage is not an easy process and, in many cases, cannot be approved so then those people who wish dearly to receive communion cannot do so. Pope Francis, the great reformer, once said, "Who am I to judge". Yes, who are we to judge if someone wants to receive the Bread of Life? Who are we to refuse it based on such and such reasons put forward by the Church laws? If Jesus was approached by these people, he would not refuse to share his body and blood with these people. 4. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? I think and believe and hope that those high-ranking people in our Church who decide on all matters will come to follow the examples of Jesus. Laws, rules and regulations, they are important and have a place, but can in other circumstances be repealed, modified and adjusted. We need to do this with compassion, mercy,

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| <p>love, hope and faith for the benefit of all humankind. May the reforms take place right and now and be a model not only in Australia but in all the Churches throughout the world. May the Almighty God bless all those involved in decision-making. May the right and just decisions be taken, not as in a court of law, but for the whole world.</p>  |
| <p>—To demonstrate to others that we show tolerance, inclusion, by encouraging others (e.g. Homosexual Catholics) to be at Church, i.e. Embracing the person, whilst not the situation.<br/>         —To encourage our young people to stay with the Church by employing (paying) qualified people to support youths in parishes. Some have this in place, e.g. [ - ] whilst some, such as my parish have nothing in place. Previously we had successions of volunteers whose only qualification was having children. This was grossly inadequate and resulted in abandonment of the group. Nearby Anglican and Baptist Church youths and children's groups are full (including with Catholics), demonstrating the need. We are losing our young people. Mass is full of mainly older people.<br/>         —To provide education on a level all adults can understand in a location close to home (in parishes) on topics relevant to today, so we can knowledgeably discuss them with others.</p>   |
| <p>To create fully representative forums in order to learn the Mind of the Spirit. From the Spirit we can see what our questions should be.</p>  |
| <p>To come back to him with all your (our) heart</p>   |
| <p>To be receptive to immigrants and refugees. For people to turn back to God. To show our Christian values. Looking after each other. How do we know what God is asking? Is it what he wants or what we want? To follow the ten commandments. Looking after our environment for future generations.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking priests to make references to more stories from Bible not same handful. The Bible is big, make more use of it, we are tired of same stories! Utilising modern Catholic songs no more old ones as old songs hold no meaning for young generation who are getting bored ... use Matt Maher... think joyful sermons like Sister Act film. Get families doing community services ... teenagers washing cars, doing lawns, teenagers are bored in church so they don't come! Priests need to lead young people to do good deeds in community, not just visit sick and elderly ... you won't have a Church if you don't involve young people ... and they want action not just sermons. God is asking us the Church to be a more family friendly place ... aiming Mass not just at elderly ... but young people and teenagers...need to make Mass more joyful. God is asking us to be respectful of all religions but also not to bow down to others. God is asking us to come together more as a community ... Church should have more family and teenage-friendly gathering ... movie nights, games nights ... for young people to want to participate in church activity, it needs to be fun ... we need to make our Church families gather more in joyful activities so that youths can have a sense of belonging. In these times, a lot of youths are lost ... make church picnics like Croatian churches do ... social events are important for youths to mingle and feel welcomed ... they don't get inspired by God's word alone ... there has to be opportunities of pulling together as a Catholic team and achieving something in the community so they can see GOD'S WORK IN ACTION through the 10 commandments and loving one another.</p> |
| <p>To reinvigorate the Catholic Church and to get rid of the somewhat stilted thinking of the hierarchy. To ensure continuance and growth of the present numbers in the Church by persuading youths to seek and find greater involvement. To substantially reduce sexual harassment by the clergy in Australia and indeed worldwide. To make the Church more inclusive by recognising gay people/lesbians/homosexuals. Allowing women a greater participation in Church activities including Masses.</p>   |
| <p>1. For diocesan priests to have the option to marry. Also priests that have left the priesthood to marry to be able to return to that ministry. 2. How does the Church in Australia get over the Royal Commission and rebuild trust in its followers? 3."Bring Good News to the poor", by being involved in groups or organising groups to advocate for more just social structures in the workplace. E.g. Unjust working conditions including casual and part time work, where it is not desired. Raising awareness of the need to increase the minimum wage. 4. A new transition of the Liturgy or a return to the previous one. With inclusive language. 5. Is the Church relevant today especially for the youths?</p>  |

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| 6. Develop tolerance towards people of other faiths Christians and non-Christians. 7. More women roles available in all levels of the Church.  |
| That we become a more inclusive Church with the acceptance of women into the clergy. That women be more included in the leadership of the Church. That clergy be allowed to marry as in other Christian Churches. That members of the Church highlight the good that the Church does, especially in the areas of social welfare and social justice to counter the attacks by the media. That the Church needs to change to meet the needs of people today—and not just in the area of the Mass.  |
| 1. To be clear, charitable and strong in voicing our Catholic beliefs especially in matters of morality and ethics such as same-sex marriage, abortion, etc. 2. To live out our faith with authenticity, striving sincerely to live with virtue, selflessness and a view towards Heaven. 3. Not to fear negative public opinion but to always stand by the truth. 4. To form our young people in faith and virtue primarily in the home and then in school.  |
| That the role of explicitly teaching about the elements of the faith be the responsibility of the parents, schools and the parish (i.e. through 'educational' Mass where the significance and meaning of parts of the Mass are taught). That the Church makes more of an effort to reach out to those who have been alienated and/or have left the Church. That there is less emphasis on ritual as a way to show love of God and more emphasis on showing our love and praise of God through our love for our neighbours. That technology be used more widely to evangelise and teach, especially with the youths. That we embrace the changes that are necessary in a positive and receptive manner.   |
| God is asking us to listen to the people. We need to make our parishes a special place to worship where the people determine whether it is a thriving parish or not. Currently, it is all dependent on the priest and whether he is open to changes or not. I do not believe that a parish's success should rest on one person. It should be the collective. The priest needs to do what they do best—Eucharist, Minister to the sick, poor etc. The priest needs time to do what he is called to do—not the parish budget, building, staffing, etc.—others should do that.  |
| To live the gospel through example to attract the youths in the faith. With moral matters like same-sex attraction, to educate Catholics on the truth, especially through the witness of people who have experienced and overcome those struggles. To form priests well and ongoing: All Diocesan priests must have fortnightly spiritual direction, with head of deanery, Vicar-General or bishop. Ongoing support group for mothers who have lost a child/ miscarriage/ stillbirth moderated by a counsellor focused on grief and loss. To keep strong the traditions of our faith—to ensure that all Catholics understand what the Mass truly is. We don't need to turn the Mass into a rock concert if we really understand what the Mass is. Young people may find the pop music etc., attractive for a while but it may not last.  |
| First, no women priests to be ordained. If Jesus willed that women can be priests, He should have made His Most Holy Mother to be one of His apostles. He didn't, though she is most holy, so that's very clear. I believe God is also asking us not to be shy about our true faith. I was born in the Philippines and I remember that when rain is needed, when the earth is cracking because of dryness, when the farmers are desperate, all of the people make a procession in honour of the blessed Virgin carrying their statues imploring rain and rain comes. I believe God is asking the leaders of our Church, our bishops, cardinals, our priests, to lead processions, so that He can manifest His power. The drought in Queensland is something that can't be solved by technology, we just need the gift of rain from above. And it needs to be televised so people can see and be converted. God is also asking us I believe, to have more voice in the laws made by the government. I am a parent and I am saddened by pornography at the tip of kids' hands. I hope and pray that pornography be banned in Australia like in Nepal, it poisons people's minds making them vulnerable to sin-crimes such as rape, violence. I thank you very much for this, giving us a chance to be heard. |
| Get back to the beginning revival in the power and fire of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Only then will you hear the voice of our Lord Jesus and what the Holy Spirit is saying to you, not from man.   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To accept the role of women in the Church. To give them a chance to become Deacons. As priests are retiring (due to ill health or age) and fewer priests are coming into the Church, women need to be encouraged to take on other roles. We feel that Women are the ones that teach the children at home and are shaping the future of the Church.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Church / parish as a “home base and place of connection” for the community.</li> <li>• Focus on Gospel values.</li> <li>• Become relevant to young people.</li> <li>• Create a new model for the Church.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>How can we be respectful of your Faith Traditions, but adapt and change to be relevant to our current and future society?</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a future for our Youth thereby a future for our Church.</li> <li>• Encourage our youths to take a Leadership role.</li> <li>• Listen to the youths in our community, trust in our youths and take some of their guidance.</li> <li>• To Pray for the young people in our community—that they take up the challenge.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Promote Catholic values in Australia.</p>  |
| <p>*For all lay people to become more involved in the Church. *To make the Church more relevant to young people.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the role of women in the Church.</li> <li>• Increase women’s education of faith, so they can evangelize—E.g. Bible study class.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>I believe God is asking us to witness to our belief in Him. This requires preparation and training for Catholics. I think parishes should offer more education especially in Bible study and apologetics. The best mode would be in small groups.</p>  |
| <p>We need to be more accessible and relatable to the young adults. Many of the group's children have left the faith even when the parents are committed to it. The faithful seem to be unable to effectively communicate their faith to the younger ones in terms that they can relate to. As a Church, we need to not only equip and educate the faithful in knowing the doctrines of the Church but also to convey them in a manner that resonates with the person in today's culture.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God wants us to share our lives and care for each other. God wants us to be involved and voice out our opinions in sensitive issues, the same issues dividing the Church and politics, Catholics against Catholics, etc. Sensitive issues like gays, the legality of same sex marriage in Church, our faith in priests and clergies who have taken advantage of their positions and violated those innocent people—young, old, disabled, those who trusted God's messengers. God wants us to be heard and blow our trumpets to knock down the high barrier dividing Catholics and Catholics, Catholics and other religious sects, Catholics and politicians. That being said, God also wants us to be active listeners too. It is by listening that we get more brilliant ideas and better results. Joining groups and actively sharing our time, talents, skills, ideas and our faith is also caring for people. It is in sharing our time that we come to know the needs of others that will lead us to realise that we can be of help. Being witnesses of God’s faithfulness is a way of sharing. We share because we care.</li> <li>• God wants us to strengthen our faith and be more prayerful. With the things that surround us trying to divert our attention to social media and technology, we have less time on things that would nourish us spiritually. We lack knowledge about God’s words that would make us stand firm on our faith. Being involved in spiritual groups will facilitate more knowledge about God. It provides opportunities to find support in prayers. It will be an avenue to discuss matters that affect us spiritually and find answers to our questions and doubts. Parents should be guided how to initiate introducing Christ to their children at a very young age. They should be role models to their children. The Church through its ministries may utilise community groups to help in moulding young minds to become better and useful residents of Australia. With stronger faith, we become more prayerful, understanding, caring and loving to people as they are our brothers and sisters in Christ.</li> <li>• God wants us to respect and love one another irrespective of the differences in religion, culture and origin. Australia as a multi-cultural country should have one common aspiration in life. That is, to make this place a better and peaceful place to live in. We can slowly achieve this if we learn how to respect one another, love one another as we are all created equal by God and to forgive one another.</li> </ul> |
| <p>—Priests, nuns, etc., to wear their habits 24/7.</p> <p>—Priests to be in charge of their parish, they have the final say.</p>   |

- Receive communion on the tongue, not the hand.
- Parishioners to wear modest clothes.
- Priests to talk more about the catechism, Marian apparitions, the saints and doctrine.
- Theology to be taught in schools or universities by priests, nuns, brothers, monks.
- Bring reverence back to the Church.
- More availability to Mass, confession, benediction, adoration.
- Sacraments available to congregation and schools.
- Holiness.
- Christ centred.
- Life of prayer.
- Family (support, defend, pass on faith, prayer life).
- Evangelise (lay people, responsible, encourage all to read).
- Promote celibacy.
- Promote pro-life.
- Brown Scapular promoted.
- Eucharistic paten/plate to be used when priests give out communion.
- Priests only to give out communion.
- Priests to adhere to right cleaning method to communion which has fallen on the ground.
- Bring kneelers back for communion.
- Bring Tridentine Masses back.
- Encourage love to Our Lady and the rosary.
- Traditional hymns and instruments.
- No modern music and no modern instruments.
- No altar girls or women at the altar.
- No Eucharistic ministers.
- No modern sculptures/statues, paintings in Churches.
- No rainbow flags in Church.

More availability of the sacraments in general including confession at schools. Catholics to use apostate to encourage people to be holy, Christ centred, and to have a life of prayer. Doctrine to be taught to lay people. For the family to be defended and supported, to pass on the Faith, and for the family to have a life of prayer. All Catholics should be encouraged to reach out to others. Celibacy should be taught as a great gift. Bishops and priests should talk up against/condemn same-sex marriage, abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality and any other immoral acts which are promoted in popular society. At the same time Catholic leaders should encourage all people to be treated with respect, dignity, and charity. The Eucharist paten (plate placed under the person's mouth or hands when receiving the Eucharist) should be brought back to Mass along with the appropriate cleaning method for dropped Eucharistic Hosts to ensure Jesus is not left on the floor. Have altar boys assisting at Mass rather than woman or girls so as to encourage boys to become priests (also Christ chose men to be priests and so it is appropriate to have boys or men support the priest in celebrating Mass). Teach people to love and respect the Pope, bishops and priests and to not talk down about them. Help there to be more Eucharistic adoration and attendance of Eucharistic adoration. Love Our Lady and the Rosary.

I think God is asking us to provide support systems for those within the Church who are also part of the LGBTQ+ community. Many turn away from their faith because they wish to live out this part of their lives without being restricted by the teachings of the Church. Rather than making these people feel like they need to change or like they are sinners, we need something that will support them and encourage them to accept who they are, whilst also continuing in their faith and making their relationship with God more important than their human relationships that they desire to have. As I myself am part of both communities, I have not abandoned my faith and I know that God is the most important part of my life, so I want to help other people like me to realise this as well, in a loving way.

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| <p>He is asking us to save our resources.</p>   |
| <p>No different to any other time in the past—to get to heaven by living a life of holiness. Recognising Jesus in the Eucharist and loving to be with him in His Church. To live a sacramental life. To have prayer as part of our daily lives. To have a strong sense of community within the parish—so people feel they're home. A place of refuge and belonging. Seeing the beautiful young priests and seminarians serve at Mass—encourages us to pray for our sons' vocations. Family and marriage. There is marriage and baptismal prep and then nothing until Holy Communion—good to have family engagement at every point in family life. Marriage prep—deeper, more practical section on communication. Support and formation for families at every stage but especially those with young children. Perhaps have family mentors i.e. older couples to mentor and support younger couples physically, socially and emotionally. Hold family festivals annually with good speakers at all levels. Encouragement and example of family, personal and parish devotions, family rosary, pilgrimages and Blessed sacrament devotion. Eucharistic Adoration to be more readily available—giving people the opportunity to getting closer to Christ. Eucharistic Procession. Schools—Provide PD for staff in true Catholic teaching—Teach Catholic values in all subject areas. Provide vibrant visiting speakers to inform and form school students so they can make good decisions. That Catholic schools are faithful to their mission. Specialist teachers to teach religion (rather than sport or art). Strong doctrinal focus in Religion instruction. Weekly Mass and regular confession—Wonderful seeing children at a class Mass. So lovely to hear the angelus bells and children say the angelus in schools. Formation. Great to go the Lenten prayer groups—would be good to have more opportunities throughout the year especially in understanding the Scriptures. Catechesis for everyone no matter the age. People will love what they understand. To have continuing and strong formation from an early age to adulthood. For priests to teach the people true Catholic teaching—people like to be clear on what is right or wrong. To use the parish bulletin to transmit true Catholic teaching and links to good sites and good books.</p> |
| <p>That the Church hierarchy accept the people in the Church are more important than the Church as an organisation and focus on their needs ad what will lead them to a better relationship with God and each other.</p>  |
| <p>I would like to see more humility on the part of the bishops. Bishop [ - ] sets a good example. I am delighted that the Pope has sacked Cardinal McCarrick. "Whatever you do to the little ones, you do to me." The Church should become less of a patriarchal society. Congregational Leaders should be more significant in decision-making in the wider Church. Seminarians should learn with women, and that women can lead and help make decisions too.</p>  |
| <p>See attachment Submission of [ - ]. Keywords: Church identity, low morale, brittle faith, lay apostolate, adult faith formation and formation of lay leaders, mainstream media, good news, voicing our views, lay involvement in homilies.</p>   |
| <p>I believe God is asking for a major reform in Church attitudes, theology and organisational structures and procedures. The attitude and priorities of Jesus Christ do not appear to characterise the Catholic hierarchy and clergy. Aspects of 4th century theology need adapting to modern times and emphasis needs to be placed not on creeds, doctrines and conformity, but on the values necessary for the advancement of the realm of God. These are expressing in the New Testament, which should take precedence over Canon Law.</p>  |
| <p>We feel sad about the treatment of refugees—it's inhumane to treat people who flee in this way. It's shocking and terrible. We need to have more involvement in interfaith and inter-church activities so that we understand others better and can reach out to them. We need to look after the people who come—we need to Love One Another! We need to absorb these people. Migrants and refugees have a lot to offer. We need to provide education and support. We can learn so much from each other. We need to be more open and caring because we are all one.</p>   |
| <p>* To be transparent, open and compassionately involved with those who have suffered abuse at the hands of clergy and religious. * To include women at all levels of the Church...parish and diocesan levels.</p>   |

God is asking us to extend acceptance to all the faithful. In particular, the ostracism of divorced people is abhorrent, especially when there are many of us [who] have left abusive marriages. The Church needs to extend compassion, understanding. It needs to represent Jesus—who welcomed the abandoned.

To defend our faith... to defend traditional marriage, to bring priests back into our schools, to make our Catholic schools Catholic and not open to other religious influences, to uphold and maintain Catholic values and virtues.

(please see attachment for summary of group discussion)—Renewal of Catholic identity—Greater ownership of the mission—Evangelisation—Improved pastoral Care and Social Justice—Greater love, acceptance and authentic welcome—greater Catholicity in Catholic schools—Improved process of welcome around the sacraments (please see attachment for greater detail).

(Please see attachment for further details about each of these key areas)—Greater role of the laity (draw on leadership + expertise)—greater role of the laity (ownership + decision making)—changes to the role + formation of clergy—those tasked with representing the people (individuals + committees including both laity and religious) need to better represent the people of the Church—Greater transparency—Well thought through transition process to accompany changes in structures and leadership (see attachment for summary of each of these key ideas).

Love others unconditionally. In this day and age it's all too easy to dislike foreigners, sinners and those who are different. We need to realize that everyone deserves our love and respect just as we seek these things from God. We need to become more tolerant of differences and more understanding towards others.

The Church must speak out against social systems and economic strategies that manipulate exploit and dehumanise people. Commitment to the vulnerable and the marginalised is most important to being a Christian.

Proper CATHOLIC FORMATION in

- Religious education, teachers to be formed in Catholic faith.
- Engaging our youths better, they are the lungs of the Church.
- Supporting our priests better with continual education on things like formation, and more engaging different audience better, e.g. public speaking skills. Place priests according to their areas of strength. Identify how priests can be better supported by the community, what resources do they need? Do they have enough prayer time themselves? Can we be engaging them in different ways (e.g. ministry work or project work to keep them engaged on their journey).
- Pre and more so post marriage formation e.g. marriage mentors.
- Resurgence of Catholic traditions, blessing of homes, processions, ways which can be tailored to different age groups.
- Catholic formation starts when we are kids, why not treat the school curriculum AND more important set a Catholic studies subject in all schools were we teach formation on issues like what so special about being a boy/ girl, what is the role of the mother/ father, family. In high school, teach NFP and how precious each life is, teach practical life skills on relationship formation, communication skills, boundaries, marriage prep skills so when they are dating they can practice these skills! (real issues that they are facing).
- Guidelines / transparency in Catholic confession (every priest I speak to has their own view on venial and moral sin and what absolved in Mass Vs Confession).
- Priests—ensuring their hearts are set on fire, many are exhausted, other are struggling with their own faith / vocation.
- Have a register of spiritual directors (these can be women! BUT NO WOMEN priests!.....).
- Parent formation at schools. The P&F groups are a joke! So little being done on parent formation. Why don't we engage parents in schools on issues like raising kids which covers so much Catholic formation and how they can teach kids on certain issues, methodologies that work? What the appropriate age to discuss things like swearing? Death? Sex? Marriage? Why do people divorce? What is love? What is murder?

I risk my reply being cliché or having perhaps antiquated notions but I do this in order to be succinct but will flesh out some of it as I proceed through the entire of this submission. I believe that God is asking us, the Church in Australia to: 1. Uphold all Catholic Teaching fearlessly and to not be swayed by the culture or modern trends. I feel this must incorporate reformation in Catholic schools, parish life, and seminary. 2. To reawaken in the faithful the call and desire for holiness and not to seek the things of the world. 3. Formulate a better pastoral approach to how we engage with and assist those in the faith who struggle with Same-Sex Attraction (SSA) whilst not compromising the Faith we hold. 4. Zero tolerance for sexual abuse, better pastoral response to the victims and explorations of ways to stop abuse from happening.

The three topics discussed at our listening sessions were: 1. Catholics need to be better formed in their faith and love of God. 2. The Church needs to become more transparent and accountable in its leadership. 3. We need to reach out to evangelise those who are distanced from the Church (Please see copies of the submissions that are attached).

Practise of the faith should be paramount in Catholic Schools, connecting students and their families with the faith. An example of how this is done very well is the tutorial system used by [ - ] College. This system is formation at its roots, with tutors providing 1:1 attention to each student and reporting to their parents regularly. The school also provides Mass every day, reconciliation constantly and continuous worship on the First Friday of every month. Opus Dei people are very committed, and the priests are very disciplined, and much involved in school and families. Social media and mobile phones are banned in the school and students are not permitted to use social media. This gives them a firm faith so that when they are older they are more able to discern good uses of social media, and not be cyber-bullied Catholic Schools should ALL have Catholic staff, firm in their faith. Comparative Religion subjects do not teach/form the faith. Every school needs a core of

good practising Catholic teachers. ACU offers good courses in Special Religious Education Students in state primary schools love SRE classes.

To grow in holiness. It is time to stop watering down our faith and move away from being lukewarm. In my experience, young people want the full truth, not a minced, watered-down version of it. Let's give it to them, through our schools and parishes. Lighten up on the 'sharing and caring' and amp up teaching on the sacraments, with a focus on the Eucharist and confession; theology of the body (for teens); Our Lady and the inspiring lives of the saints. Our young people are hungry for the Truth and it is discovering it that they will find freedom. The Eucharist needs to be at the centre of our faith—the source and summit—and therefore in the centre of our churches. This is the most prominent position and it would be nice to have the tabernacles returned to their rightful place at the centre of the church, behind the altar. We also need more opportunities for Eucharistic adoration and exposition, through which the Church and its members will receive many graces.

I believe that God is asking of us in Australia at this time to become a more gender inclusive Church.

I would like to see that we seriously question how we use our God given resources and as a Church and a parish, encourage others to do the same. I think we need to be a more environmentally friendly focussed Church. Taking seriously the issues of the environment and using the gifts of creation given to us, as gift, rather than a right! I think it is time we stop wanting more and buying more, and become a Church that uses only what it needs responsibly. I believe that all churches should be sustainable. We are increasingly putting in heating and air conditioning to make the church experience more pleasurable and that's fine, but we really need to have ways of making these 'luxuries' more sustainable—putting in solar panels etc...It would be great for a parishes to encourage and perhaps collaborate so that not only the church building is sustainable but that the members of the parish can work together and getting the best prices on solar panels—so that everyone can also have these. And perhaps those who have 'more' can support those that do not have the finances to do so.

To listen to Him and think about what has gone wrong in the Church. I am a practicing Catholic, but the last 5 or so years have been painful. On a large scale the child sexual abuse scandal has been a source of great concern to me. I have continued to encourage my children to go to Church, but I know that some families have been destroyed by the sexual abuse of members of the family and by the Church hierarchy continuously covering up the truth. The hierarchy have put the reputation of the Church over the safety and health of so many people. [ - ] has spoken at the Vatican meeting quite clearly and yet the response from the Vatican has been underwhelming. What more needs to be said and done to convince the Vatican that change is needed. The Church needs to distance itself from the stance that only the ordained can have a real say, because that is what the past has allowed and we are reaping the results of this now. I am angry that I feel betrayed by the powerful of the Church. I assist in the sacramental programme in my parish and I do so to help families enter into a full life in Christ. I look at these families and wonder what exactly is going to happen so a new generation of children are not abused. My primary comfort here is that there simply aren't enough priests to go around, so the chances of abuse have statistically reduced. That is not a great plan for the future. The Church needs to open itself to scrutiny and accept that a period of humility is a consequence for a long period of arrogance. The op ed piece in today's SMH by Frances Sullivan (27th Feb) makes compelling reading. I would suggest all clerics here in Australia and in the Vatican read this piece and think about what it means. I think that the Church has not genuinely apologised to victims or to the parishioners who sit in the pews week after week, putting money in the collection plates. I think that the Federal Government should closely consider just why they are pumping billions into Catholic schools when the institution that created these schools is so flawed at present. God has given us a masterful creation and as Australians we are ignoring our responsibility as stewards. The Church should push politicians to respond to the reality of climate change and ignore the sceptics who are controlling the debate. The Church needs also to be reacting to the social problems of caring for the sick, disabled and elderly. With the Royal Commission into aged

care beginning, I am praying that there are not a whole lot of horror stories around poor care and the exploitation of the elderly through the Catholic Churches significant role in the provision of care both in home and in Aged Care Facilities. Again the Federal Government heavily subsidises these types of care and the Church must be above commercial concerns, rather being motivated by Christ's message of love of our neighbour.

Evangelisation of the youths, about the sacraments, and Catechism and Catholic apologetic education to prevent the youths leaving the Church. Parishes must promote Bible studies for parents and the youths. Catholic schools must promote and encourage students to practice the faith and Catholic devotion and promote the true teaching of the Church on faith and morals.

For parishioners to be united, growing together in our faith as a prayerful Eucharistic Community. Marriage preparation classes and ongoing support groups for married couples. Programs to bring our youths back to Church and to retain them within our Catholic Church, and to see them grow freely, loving and living their faith. World Youth day, does so much for those who can afford to go overseas to participate in those gatherings. Can we have similar gatherings on a yearly basis within Australia, so more Youths can attend and be nourished by these gatherings? Themes can align to those of our Pope. Catechism classes should not be reduced (compromised) in line with the "busyness" of the people of today. Holding classes over 2 weekends to prepare candidates to receive the Sacred Eucharist is not enough. At a minimum, classes should go for 45 minutes per class over a 6 week period with at least 1 parent attending.

[1] I believe we are asked to hold to the faith that Jesus taught and that means to truly love one another, and that implies getting to be a vibrant, helpful, faithful community of people i.e. a Church in the truest sense. Sadly we often recognise fellow parishioners but know nothing about them, even their names. Even sadder, we only recognise those who attend the Mass we regularly attend. "Love" is care and a joy in a shared faith. To paraphrase the words of the song "to know you is to love you". If we don't know each other we do not communicate our faith in words or practical ways i.e. we are not a community, a body faith in the pattern of Christ. [2] We also need Church leaders to reinforce the principles of our faith openly and courageously. The silence from our leaders during gay marriage debate was deafening, apart from the "don't mess with marriage" booklet. [3] If lay people are to be encouraged to take a greater part in the operation of the Church there needs to be greater transparency and better communication. Speaking for myself, I will not volunteer for the parish Council on the basis of "advising" the priest. I would consider it if the job description was clearer. Parishioners provide most of the funds for the parish. There should be forum for the parish plans and funds to be presented and an opportunity for questions and debate. Presenting the accounts from the lectern during Mass does not cut it. [4] The part that the Catholic Educational Office and the Diocese plays in the operation of a parish is not understood even by older parishioners and most certainly not by the young. If we are to provide opportunities for community building to strengthen participation in Church activities it must begin with some education as to how these outcomes are to be achieved and the part the CEO and Diocese plays in the decisions. Like any family, cooperation grows when the need is known and the resources identified. God calls us to work together on both a human and spiritual level and any plan for renewal must have both elements

\* Hold firm to our traditional values and ethics—we know what we are as a Church community and we see no reason to submit to political correctness, especially when its objectives have already been tried and failed in earlier/other civilisations, e.g. ancient Greece and Rome, Soviet Union, etc. The Catholic Church is older than any modern democracy, dictatorship, or council of elders. Additionally, empires, kingdoms, nations and states have come and gone and yet our Church still stands. Hence, we do not need to be told our faith is wrong because history shows otherwise. \* Evangelise and at the very least, educate the world and our youths about our rich history and how we, as the Church, have shaped the world, for the better. Our antagonists like to believe that we are against free artistic expression and scientific development when history clearly shows otherwise. Whether it be the murals of the Sistine Chapel or the Big Bang Theory or even the Magna Carta, to name a few, the Church or members of it were powering/discovering/creating them. \* Reach out more to the

marginalised and let the world know who and what we are so that it becomes more difficult for our antagonists to defame us. Too often, the major media outlets have some grossly negative and/or biased article against us and it no doubt fools the impressionable from within our flock and those outside. \* Remind our flock that our Catholic faith is the light of the world, not a light from the world. In other words, we as a Church are meant to lead the nation and the rest of the world to our heavenly father, with no exceptions! That means we do not want to see contradictory ethics promoted, accepted or tolerated by our clergy! Many of us, to exemplify, felt awfully betrayed when we saw members of our clergy publicly supporting same sex marriage, like Fr. Frank Brennan. No doubt he, together with his divergent comrades, failed to understand that what is unhealthy for the Church is also unhealthy for the rest of society. Such duplicity, exhibited by like-minded priests, presents itself as a lack of faith in holy scripture and holy tradition and implicitly mocks the sanctity and function of our physical selves. \* Greater community spirit and community building with the blessing, supporting and promoting by the bishops and priests. Too many of our youths appear to be glued to their gadgets or just too unkeen to mingle with others. Hence, the Church could encourage its members to form interest groups and/or social events targeted at attracting not just the youths but any age group. Such groups already exist but it could be exceptionally beneficial if more of the clergy could personally promote and participate in such groups/activities. In this way, the faithful may come to learn more from/about each other and likely attract others that may be searching for what we already have. \* Less shuffling of priests. \* Priests to stay celibate. \* Make volunteering for the poor mandatory for WYD pilgrims.

Govern according to God's laws. Seek his wisdom. Reach out to the out laying posts of the body of Christ. Gather everyone to the faith.

• Australia needs the Holy Mass. There is a great demand and love for the Holy Mass to be celebrated daily. The Mass is the most important prayer of the Church which puts the Eucharist (Jesus himself) as the centre of each Christian's life. However my observation is that the averages of Monday to Saturday Mass times of each parish are around 9 to 9:30. These Mass times cater more for the self-employed and retired folk. There are people—especially the average people who work 9 to 5—who desire to attend daily Mass. However, due to reasons being that the Mass around the parish of where they work or where they live are not available at a convenient time. My suggestion would be for parish priests to consider having additional Masses (or move their Masses) either in the early morning or at night. Even better if surrounding cluster of parishes can coordinate different Mass time to ensure a wide variety of daily Mass times in the morning (or evening) are covered. Pray to Our Lady Queen of all priests and confessors to make more sacrifices to add more Masses in the parishes and even better to increase priestly vocations to have more daily Masses (and daily Mass goers) and bring more people to Jesus Christ. • Australia needs formation. It needs to get back to basics and have a plan to have solid formation of all Catholics. a. Doctrinal formation: Getting the basic teachings of the Magisterium of the Holy Catholic Church. b. Human formation: Basic character and virtues (Patience, Fortitude, Temperance, Generosity, Self-giving sacrifice, etc.). c. Professional formation: Every person finds dignity in their work and their contribution to society. Being a good worker means being a good Christian. d. Spiritual formation: Every Catholic must be encouraged to have a spiritual director and have a great devotion to the sacrament of frequent confession. I believe this starts with the family. When mum and dad are well formed—children will be better formed. Keep marriages together. Strive to lower divorce rates. Emphasise the need to form the family well in these aspects. There are many institutions such as Family Education Australia that at least address the human formation of marriages. Pre-marriage seminars must be longer (not just one weekend), and have great emphasis on the doctrinal and spiritual formation of marriage. God needs strong well-formed children in Australia who come from well-formed marriages and families. As the prophecy of our Lady of Fatima goes: "the final battle between God and Satan will be over the family".

I think God is saying "wake up everyone, no one person is better than the other and everyone is created equal. For this reason we will be allowing married men to become priests, we will also be

allowing women to become priests. As of today the leader of the Catholic Church in Australia is now in Jail for thinking he was above the law, above God and above you. He is not and he will be punished for his sins and once his time comes to be with God he shall be having a visit downstairs first. Although I as God forgive you for confessing your sins, unfortunately I cannot forgive Pell as he is not admitting to his sins. Just because you lie doesn't make the truth go away."

That we should love Him and teach our children to love Him and live our Catholic faith to the full making use of all the sacramental Graces the Church has to offer us. We need to greet Our Lord each morning, offer Him our work, thank him for his marvellous Creation, and ask his help throughout our day and teach our children to do the same, perhaps by making the Morning Offering together. The priest at Holy Mass needs to remind us often in his homily of these simple but effective means of growing in our love for God and children need to be taught in their religion classes. We need to deepen in our love for the Mass and the Eucharist. People need to be encouraged to attend Holy Mass during the week on one or two days and make frequent visits to Jesus in the Blessed sacrament. My Nanna taught me this when I was a little child and that way Jesus has always been my dear friend. Children can be encouraged when they arrive at school in the morning and when they go home to pop in to the Church. Again, we all need this encouragement from the pulpit. God is asking us to love His dear mother and go to her for all our needs. Our Lady has always been here for her Australian children. The Holy Rosary needs a prominent place in the personal and collective life of parishes. Confession needs to be readily available to parishioners and we need to be encouraged regarding its benefits. Frequent Confession is a wonderful way of keeping families together and happy, because by its means each member is helped to face his part in conflict and given Grace to overcome faults. For all of this we need many and holy priests. But with love and patience, priests will come when young people are taught to love Jesus.

I feel the Spirit is asking the Church to minister to the many intellectually disabled people who do not know Jesus Christ. Even though the Mass is the source and summit of our Catholic faith it is often beyond the understanding of thousands. People living in group homes are often deprived of any religious or spiritual input. Families caring for disabled people who try to instruct them have very little help from the Catholic Church. The only regular form of worship and community gathering is the Mass in which the language used is beyond the understanding of many disabled people. I have a son who is totally blind and intellectually disabled. Catholic schools anywhere in [ - ] would not accept him and now at age 44 and needing a group home the Catholic Church has nothing to offer in terms of enhancing his spirituality. He knows Jesus and loves Him because of family input but what happens when I die. There is no mention of God in secular group homes and there is no such thing as a Catholic group home anywhere in my area and beyond. The Catholic Church provides only one day program in western Sydney that I am aware of and it is unsuitable or unattainable for many. People living in out of home care are often lonely, have multiple physical and intellectual disabilities and of all God's creatures are greatly in need of the knowledge that He loves them. Families who care for disabled people are struggling to understand and work with the new National Disability Insurance Scheme. Horrendous stories can be read on social and print media of the pain and frustration of people who are emotionally and physically exhausted trying to do the best for their loved ones. They need help. The Spirit is asking the Catholic Church to seek out and help these families who although are right in the middle of our communities are not always visible. The provision of a regular easy to understand liturgy would be a good start. Staff in group homes would escort and support their attendance if such a service was available. Let's face it, how many intellectually disabled people do we see at Mass? It is too hard for them. However many would have enough understanding to receive the Blessed sacrament if a simply worded Communion Service was delivered or appreciate the love of Jesus portrayed in music. The Catholic Church provides Communion and other Services to the aged care sector but very little to the disabled. Jean Vanier and L'Arche gave us an example to follow. I find no evidence of his work in my community. Maybe we the carers should do more to rectify the situation but we are exhausted. As for the disabled people who have no family and live alone what hope do they have of negotiating the difficult and complicated NDIS and other services?

They suffer in silence. Jesus lived a simple life with nowhere to lay His head. As followers of Him, it would be helpful not to see the priests and bishops of the Church pictured in the media in fine robes and riches.

The same as he always has. To be obedient to him, to love him, to love our families and to obey the pope, his representative on earth. He wants us to keep his commandments and spread his teachings wherever possible. He wants us to do the sacraments, which are another of his gifts to us. He wants us to love and protect the vulnerable, the poor and the lonely. He wants us to love our children and our spouses. He wants us to path on our faith and to lead by example. He wants us to fight against abortion and to protect the marriage sacrament. He wants us to fight for traditional marriage. He wants us to be bold in defending our faith, he wants us to know our faith.

I think the number one thing is change for the better in line with God's wishes. These should include positive action to stop the abuse of children within the Church and no more cover ups of what has happened. All priests and bishops who have committed crimes against children should be reported and jailed as should those who have covered up their crimes. It is an utter disgrace that this ever happened, but it is now the Church's job to rectify it. There should also be an apology from these disgusting individuals to all members of the Church as we now have to deal with hatred and discrimination because of this. I feel so sorry for all the good priests because they are taking the brunt of it. No more sanctity of the confessional either. If anyone confesses a crime it should be the duty of the priest to report it. Not doing so is a sin as far as I am concerned and I am sure God would say the same. All Catholics are now up against a fight against all those who hate the Catholic Church and we must be very strong to win this battle. I would also like to see a worldwide public acknowledgement of the apparitions at Medjugorje by the Pope so the world knows that God loves us and wants us to change our lives. There are so many people who have turned their backs on God and Mary is reaching out to us so it is our duty to spread the word. I would also like to see much more involvement of women in the Church. In my opinion, they should be allowed to be priests, deacons and altar servers etc. I don't know where God has said they can't be. The Catholic Church has been a boys' club for far too long. Attitudes towards birth control for women who have had children and can't have any more for financial or health reasons should also be changed. I believe more involvement from the lay people of the Church should also be encouraged. Most Catholics are very good people but their voices are not being heard. I am a committed Catholic no matter what happens but would love to see these changes made. Unfortunately too many people can't see past the mistakes of the Church and we need to make sure this changes.

To be more interactive with other Christian faith communities. To bring back reverence in the Church especially for Holy Mass. To incorporate praise and worship in Church activities, make it more lively. Allow lay preachers a bigger role in Church activities and even during sermons on Sunday Mass. To explain the reasons behind the sacraments, the process of the Holy Mass to the congregation so there is greater understanding. Not just routine activity. To encourage more Catholic faith building through Catholic schools. Be less intellectual and more experiential. Bring back the miracles, signs and wonders. Have more of Pope Francis' teachings available at grass root levels. Have more women involved in the Church, especially at higher up roles. Allow priests to marry/have female priests. Have more youths leaders involved in the Mass celebrations. Find out and address why the Catholics leave our Church and attend other Christian denominations. Be more personally welcoming of people. To put a lot more emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Bring back the charismatic movement to the Church in everyday activities. Encourage more testimonies to be shared during Mass. Make Mass more personal. To have a quiet room in every Church so that young families are encouraged to attend Sunday school for children. To be more inclusive of the divorced/gay/transgender people in Church.

1. God is calling Catholics in Australia to unity and commitment. This can only happen under the clear leadership of the Church. The Church has not been giving strong, vocal leadership in the community. Many Catholics feel alone and isolated in their beliefs and therefore feel insecure in their beliefs. Despite the Church child abuse scandals, the Church must be audacious and retake

moral leadership. This can only happen with COMPLETE honesty, humility and co-operation with legal authorities. There is no room for powerful self-interests in this matter. The Church must mobilise its many resources, particularly in Catholic schools and organisations and its considerable media. The Church needs to encourage all Catholics and students in Catholic schools to become involved in rallies and marches that promote Catholic values and religious rights. 2. Catholic schools need to become more authentically Catholic. Many Catholic schools have only a small number of practising Catholics who feel in the minority and are often isolated in their beliefs. Often sport and academic results are given much greater reverence than Catholic worship and faith. 3. There is a great need to regain the loss of trust among the Catholic community and the whole world. Only complete honesty and transparency will help heal the shocking wounds of betrayal and abuse. 4. There is a great need for the parishes to reach out to all age groups. The Church is losing many of its flock to other religions such as "Hillsong" because of the welcoming sense of community they provide.

How do we Catholics respond to the sexual abuse cases in our Church? It is imperative that we deliver justice to all those who have committed these acts of evil and support the victims in every way we can—and I believe that we still have yet to do this. I have found myself lately being ashamed of the Catholic Church's response to the sexual allegations. How do we encourage more of the youths to participate in the Catholic faith? I have noticed that lately my parish population has been on a decline, especially when it comes to the youths. I often feel isolated in my faith when it comes to my age group.

I think God wants us to stay strong against the greens and such. I am a teen, and I know that I, and all of my Catholic friends, do not like the newish hymns. They often are boring and don't really feel like they belong at Mass. It turns me and other teens off going to some watery Mass and makes us want to go to a different, stronger religion. We need to be less lukewarm and be alight with our faith. Having fewer rules just means that you attract people that aren't really good. Also, I am a musician, and I find it irritating at Mass when there is a trendy off-key choir that is made up of old people and not really anyone with talent. Church choirs are meant to praise God. There should be auditions before a new member joins the choir, not just accepting whoever waltzes into the choir loft. Also, if the singer of the responsorial psalm is out of tune or not a good singer anyway, the responsorial psalm should be read. Trendy priests are also a deterrent. Saying 'sisters and brothers' instead of 'brothers and sisters' doesn't make us girls feel better. To finish, talking after Mass inside the Church is disruptive and annoying. People are trying to pray and you have some old bloke talking to his friend loudly in the pew in front of you. Even after Mass, the Church remains a sacred place. Okay, I'm not finishing yet, hold up. I was shocked when I went to my confirmation classes last year, and saw how badly kids are being taught the faith. I go to [ - ] School for Girls and we are taught religion well. Some of these kids didn't know what the rosary was for goodness sakes, or hadn't had their first reconciliation. I think that confirmation should not be taken lightly. Some parents put their kids through confirmation without a second thought. The kids should know their faith well, and truly think about what they are doing. Okay. I'm done. I hope you think about what I have said.

I think He is asking for a Church directed and encompassed by ALL of His People—not just the clergy. Since roughly 50% are women, it is essential that their influence is felt.

God is asking me to make him a priority as the bustle and fast pace of modern society takes over. However I find it very difficult to do so in Mass. I feel the Mass we celebrate is not how Jesus shared the last supper. I feel he broke bread, shared wine and asked followers to share God's message. He taught his followers how to evangelise. I believe the Mass needs to be revised to focus more on praise, worship, conversations with God and communion rather than Mass settings and endless creeds and Gloria's. The Mass we are celebrating is very outdated. Each parish has to make their own slides, presentations, etc. and it is very time consuming. I think priests should be given a monthly curriculum of content for their homilies. The diocese should provide videos, imagery and a daily readings app with reflections similar to how Hillsong stays connected with their members.

I believe that God is asking us to follow in Christ's footsteps as he has been able to depict the qualities of "faith, hope and love" enabling adherents to bind together in perfect unity.

In a changing world, the Church should allow young men to take up priesthood for shorter periods of time. E.g.: 5 years, 10 years, etc. when they dedicate themselves to this role. They should be able to leave after this period without any stigma. Those who want to continue can of course do so. It is not a lifetime of celibacy and would give young men who feel the calling of priesthood encouragement knowing that it is not a lifetime commitment. Of course, they will have to accept and work with the standards and expectations of the Church. It would also make them more understanding of life even if they chose not to continue after their time as a priest. Young people, in the current world we live in want choices. They do not want to be forced into situations. This option would encourage them to take up this role if they know they have a choice to leave it if they chose to. If they choose not to continue, we would still have an informed young man in our society. This does not in any way undermine priesthood. On the contrary, it might strengthen it. Every young man taking up the role would want to give it their best. If they find fulfilment, they will stay, without any outside pressure. If they are struggling with it, they will choose to leave, without any stigma. What a win-win situation!! On the plus side, there would be more young men willing to take up priesthood if they knew they had a choice. And that is a strong need we are facing in our Church today. I strongly feel that God would want us to work as best as we can within the needs and availability of our circumstances.

I think the Church in Australia needs to be an inclusive Church, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. We need to be more embracing of those marginalised by society. We need to learn from the Royal Commission and we need to improve our practices so that similar instances don't happen again. We need to be encouraging and supportive of the youths in our Church. The Church needs to remember the key ideas around discipleship, walking and learning together and sharing God's message. We need to be more proactive in our care for the environment, with regards to Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*. I think we need to act with more compassion to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who have escaped persecution and struggles in their home countries. Our government is creating an 'us vs them' mentality, and we need to be of service to them, just as Christ would have.

We ask that our Catholic Church become Charismatic and ALIVE! They need to loosen up on some of their laws and become like Jesus and how He lived His Ministry. Jesus welcomed everyone, loved everyone no matter if they were gay, divorced, prostitutes, rich or poor. Jesus loved the sinners and downtrodden. When my husband and I wished to get married, we approached the Church for an annulment of our previous marriages but they said it was a long process but we got married anyway by a Christian pastor with God's blessings. We were even told that receiving communion is not allowed by the Church as we were committing adultery. Jesus didn't say that, He said 'Come as you are, I love you.' We need a change! Allow women to become priests. Give priests the choice of marriage. Allow lay people to celebrate Mass. Introduce praise and worship in weekly Masses.

Personally, I think God is asking the Catholic Church to become more united and teach more about the Bible rather than the Catholic Church. In my experience with "Church activities", rather than speaking about the Bible and God's teaching, they focus more about teaching things about what is going on in the Catholic Church or what the Catholic Church is, when we should be focusing more on the Bible, and God. I also feel as if God is asking us all to be more focus on Him, to turn towards Him rather than only attending Church on Sunday and thinking that's good enough for them throughout the week, and people thinking that because they've attended Church on Sunday then they are "Holy" enough to enter the gates of heaven. I feel like the Lord is trying to push us towards Him more and more every day. With me, I struggle personally, to understand God's will and to focus my eyes unto Him but I see the Catholic Church falling, and it's sad to see more and more young people not attending Mass. I feel as though the Church needs something more, to help the younger generations to be more involved, it's like at around the ages of 17-30 people stop attending Mass, either they are "too busy" or just not properly motivated and not having anything to engage more with the Lord. It's these ages (17-30) that we should be more focused on because we are the next generation, we are

the ones who are to keep the Catholic Church alive and running so for us to be able to engage in Church activities and Masses will also benefit the Catholic Church.

Now more than ever it is so important that we respond to God's call to live holy lives. This means not just practicing our faith but being able to share it and defend it. Areas of priority should be given to:

-Stronger formation in the Catechism. Particularly in our Catholic schools, but also across all ages of parishioners.

-To renew our zeal for the Eucharist, to hold Eucharistic processions through the schools, streets, cities. For priests to model greater respect for the Eucharist by encouraging receiving communion on the tongue and having less lay servers distributing the Eucharist.

-To have pre and post marriage support for families through family groups, talks, prayer groups, have strong family traditions e.g. Sunday Mass weekly, rosaries, First Friday devotions, First Saturday devotions.

-Support groups for those who are experiencing same sex attraction as well as their families—helping them to seek God's call to true masculinity and femininity, that everyone is called to live chastely in accordance with God's will.

-For our parish priests and most especially bishops to defend traditional marriage in public forums

-To ensure that there are specifically trained, practising Catholics as specialist Religious Education teachers in all Catholic schools (as opposed to specialist Sport, Art, Music teachers and non-practising/non-religious classroom teachers teaching RE in the classroom).

-To ensure students in Catholic schools attend weekly Mass and regular confession, hear the Angelus bells ring.

-To make use of social media and multimedia (e.g. podcasts, vlogs, etc.) to help the faithful access good Catholic formation regularly.

-To support and promote Catholic initiatives (such as Parousia Media) throughout the Diocese - Mandatory teaching of 'Theology of the Body' in all Catholic schools.

No different to any other time in the past—to get to heaven by living a life of holiness. Recognising Jesus in the Eucharist and loving to be with him in His Church. To live a sacramental life. To have prayer as part of our daily lives. To live a better spirit of penance as Our Lady in her apparitions teaches. To have a strong sense of community within the parish—so people feel they're home. A place of refuge and belonging. Seeing the beautiful young priests and seminarians serve at Mass—encourages us to pray for our sons' vocations. Family and marriage—Theology of the Body should be mandatory in all Catholic schools and marriage Prep. Marriage prep—deeper section on communication. Support and formation for families at every stage but especially those with young children. Encouragement and example of family, personal and parish. Devotions. Family Rosary. Pilgrimages. Blessed sacrament devotion. Eucharistic Adoration to be more readily available—giving people the opportunity to getting closer to Christ. Eucharistic Procession. Schools Provide PD for staff in true Catholic teaching—Teach Catholic values in all subject areas. Provide vibrant visiting speakers to inform and form school students so they can make good decisions. Strong doctrinal focus in Religion instruction. Weekly Mass and regular confession—Wonderful seeing children at a class Mass. So lovely to hear the angelus bells and children say the angelus in schools. Formation Great to go the Lenten prayer groups—would be good to have more opportunities throughout the year especially in understanding the Scriptures. Catechesis for everyone no matter the age. People will love what they understand. To have continuing and strong formation from an early age to adulthood. For priests to teach the people true Catholic teaching—people like to be clear on what is right or wrong To use the parish bulletin to transmit true Catholic teaching and links to good sites and good books.

We believe that God is asking Australia to bring people back to a greater knowledge and understanding of their Faith. This has to begin with adults, old and young. Some of the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ are not properly understood by many adults, which in turn also make it more difficult to love Him and to do His will. Some practical solutions to this problem offered by our group are: 1) All Religious Education teachers need a basic understanding of the tenets of the

Catholic Faith before they can teach anything on the topic of Catholicism. Perhaps this is already done to a degree but from what the recent high school graduates said in our group discussion is they and their friends from other Catholic Schools were not taught the basics of the Catholic Faith. So teachers need to be tested on their knowledge of the Faith and their knowledge of the life of Christ. And if they don't have a good grasp then perhaps they need to attend classes themselves on Catholicism. 2) Parents want their children to receive the sacraments but they themselves don't know what they are or what are their purposes? Therefore, parents who put their children into sacramental programs need to attend a separate class while the children attend a class. Perhaps the sacramental program can be taught to the kids in one corner of the room and in the other corner their parents are receiving instruction. The content of this class will be catered to adults and could include how they can best help their children flourish in the Faith. 3) Godparents need also much more formation if they are to be authentic Godparents to their Godchildren. So if a couple ask someone or another couple to become Godparents, this should come with a requirement that they also pass a basic test on the tenets of the Catholic Faith and if they can't pass, then they will need to attend a number of classes. It's quite sad when your godparent doesn't even know who God is and doesn't realise that the best way they can help you is through prayer.

Youth Masses—Having a youths Mass every week in a parish can be very appealing and actually can attract quite a large congregation of young people. However, outside of that young people seem to have very little love for Christ and don't use the sacraments of the Church to grow closer to God. Here are some ideas a group of young men at university came up with to get the most out of the youths Mass: 1. Keep the youths informed. Get a young person to create a WhatsApp/ social media group in a parish that puts the focus on the Youth Mass on a Sunday night and the events surrounding the Mass including Adoration of the Blessed sacrament, Confession, talks of formation, food and music, etc. 2. Offer confession/the sacrament of reconciliation before during and after the youth Mass. Make sure it's announced to the congregation. If you don't have enough priests in the parish to a combined youth Mass of a number of parishes. 3. Offer Adoration of the Blessed sacrament before and after the Mass. Perhaps get smaller groups to commit to spending time with Our Lord by advertising to the group through what's app. Adoration could be every Sunday before Mass or done once a month. 4. Offer a talk by a layperson or priest on some aspect of the Faith important to young people such as: Who is Christ? How do you form a relationship with Him? What are His main teachings? You could also have someone talk about a popular topic that is leading many people to turn away from the Faith or give up on Christ or the Church. Like pornography, loneliness, marriage, media consumption, lack of modesty (why don't we walk around naked or wear really scanty clothes), lack of temperance in material wealth and in the way we eat and drink, learning to receive the Eucharist only in the state of Grace. 5. Offer food, drinks and perhaps musical performances once a month after the Mass. 6. There should be a talk given specifically about how to dress for Mass. Not to wear tank tops, shorts that are incredibly short, etc. ... this is especially important for Eucharistic Ministers who are distributing communion. One student made the comment that young people will dress better to go clubbing than to receive God Himself in the Eucharist. 7. Finally in the Mass itself, probably once a month the priest should explain at each stage of the Mass what is happening.

I think that God is asking the same of us now as he was thousands of years ago, to love him and love others by obeying his commandments.

Priests ought to educate the laity who are not conversant with their faith, via the RCIA, Bible Study and most especially via Homilies especially Sunday Homilies. Many RCIA Team members who welcome new Catholics into the faith have very little knowledge themselves on the teachings of the Church. It is not about netting "new Catholics"—more importantly it is on handing down of the faith. Laity should be listened to when there is a concern regarding a Church matter, and not merely dismissed as irrelevant or put into the 'too hard basket' ... Specifically, in the matter of child abuse, even those parents whose children have not suffered abuse feel the need for those priests who have

sinned to be named and brought to justice. It is not only about compensation or the role the bishops played. Using the Media, we need to promote places of pilgrimage around the world, not just via Travel Agents or Church newsletters, but via the wider Media. The Holy Land should be promoted particularly during Lent and Easter. Most people, including Catholics, have never heard of Fatima or Lourdes or places where Relics are held, e.g. Cologne Cathedral for the Gifts of the Magi. Domus Australia in Rome should also be promoted as a place accommodating pilgrims visiting Rome. We also need to promote places of pilgrimage within Australia. Few Australian Catholics know about St. Mary MacKillop, our first Australian Saint, or pilgrimages to the places she was born, worked, lived and her Tomb at Mary MacKillop Place in Sydney. Our first priest who came to the shores of Botany Bay and said Mass for the first time in Australia is little known even among Catholics. Reverence is lacking in the majority of our Catholic Churches. We are all crying out for authentic solemn liturgies with music to match. I am in my 70's and would love to kneel to receive Holy Communion, this priceless gift we possess as Catholics, but can only do so if Altar Rails are in place (moveable or permanent). Many young people already take Holy Communion kneeling and on the tongue, so there is a message there. The Tabernacle should be in the centre of the Sanctuary where it is given rightful prominence and adoration. More Holy Hours should be encouraged. Education For the majority of Catholics, their sole experience of the Catholic faith comes through the SCHOOLS, and not through the LIFE OF THE PARISH. A school can only teach technical information—a school cannot inspire a student to grow in a relationship with God. That old adage—the Catholic faith is CAUGHT, not TAUGHT, is true! Schools, by their very nature, cannot inspire the Catholic faith—only LIFE IN THE PARISH can do that. There is an element of fear when it comes to teaching the real Catholic faith, and Catholic Schools today are not teaching the definitive, essential contents of the Catholic faith.

God is asking that the Church listens to His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven i.e. more prayer teachings, fewer Canon Law Rules. The Church has to follow Jesus' example and allow all the parishioners to follow the basics. There has to be more groundswell from the parishioners and less boring sermons from "imported priests", who seem to have a tendency to have an anti-Vatican II bias. Perhaps even allow priests to move away from being dominated by males, as many other Christian religions have lady ministers, the Church should seriously do some rejigging before the progressives abandon ship.

If pre-marriage courses aren't already compulsory for a couple to complete before being married in the Catholic Church they should be. Couples need to be informed about how they can fully live out the beautiful meaning of the Vocation in which they will be embracing, and their crucial role in the Church and the wider community—to perfectly replicate the Divine Love of God. Pre-marriage courses should be deeply infused in the Churches precious teachings of the Theology of the Body, this way couples will know the beautiful reasons why the Church is against things like contraception, IVF, pornography, etc.—things that have become so normal for today's culture that so many people don't genuinely realise are morally wrong. There should generally be more opportunities for Faith formation, as the more we know and learn about the beauty, truth and goodness of the Church and its teachings, the more we'll come to love and appreciate the precious treasure we have in our Faith and the Church. Opportunities for Faith formation should not only be more numerous, but also more easily accessible, aimed at every age group and Vocation. Adoration should be made more easily accessible. Reverence in Churches should be much more promoted. Modesty- particularly regarding the way women when in Church- should be monitored. Modesty should be much more promoted and enforced, particularly in God's House.

To practice what we preach and behave in ways that are accepting of ALL not just those we choose to accept and then discriminate against those we wish to (The Church has behaved outrageously regarding gay marriages telling us to Vote NO) and in its acceptance of ALL. Its teaching come out as hypercritical, judgemental and discriminatory in its love of ALL people. The Church leaders have behaved shamefully in the lack of protection of children when it has come to the abuse of children and focused on protecting the Church at the expense of the care of children and the most vulnerable

in society. The total opposite of what I saw as Catholic teachings, Even when they are found guilty, the leaders rather than accepting their penance, are wasting more of our money taking things to an appeal. The Church should be using their own money (sell the priest's marble chair at [ - ] Church for a start) all the wasted money on luxuries rings and gold, etc. that we are not supposed to value! The leaders, their behaviour and their assets and hierarchical power is shameful and hypercritical and so against the teachings of the Catholic Faith that it becomes humiliating for those who believe to try and justify why we practice in the Catholic Faith. God is asking us to practice what we Preach when it comes to loving and caring for others in a non-judgemental way and accepting our mistakes, apologising for them and then doing penance for them (have yet to see the priests/Cardinals etc. in the child abuse cases doing that). God is asking that we are Christian and Loving and the judgemental discriminatory behaviour of our preaching and Catholic Faith has made our Church look so archaic, out of touch with our society/reality and hypercritical. It is a system of unequal power imbalances not only in positions and protection of offenders but also in gender and it reeks of abuse. God is asking us to go back to the fundamentals of humility, love, care, generosity, faith, and steer away from material possessions (the Catholic Church and its many visible jewels, gold possessions or special marble chairs for priests is not presenting these values in their judgemental critical sermons at Mass or in the priest's (as there are few visible nuns) Cardinals' and bishops' behaviours focusing on the protection of the Church's name over the vulnerable. God is asking that the Church leaders practice what we preach about values not just expect the community to do it for them whilst the leaders do the opposite! I think God is asking us to listen to the people (including those who have been faithful throughout their whole lives attending Mass regularly and working in a role that helps the most vulnerable) and what they need. Listen to all those who have now pulled away from the Church because they could just stomach no more as the Church Leaders have continued to only focus on the protection of the Church and its very, very shameful leaders.

Society in Australia has changed. People are more aware of individual rights. They are more educated and questioning. Most people are not connected to an organised religion. For many, religion has become irrelevant to their lives. People are still concerned with ethics, justice and often spirituality. In addition, our society is pluralistic. I think God is asking us to experience Christianity in this age and turn away from the clericalism, power and control of a hierarchical Church and become a Church of equal adults. (ref: Bishop [ - ] "Address to priests in Australia and New Zealand" 13/9/18) In addition, we should stop the intense navel gazing at our own spirituality /sinfulness and instead reach out to build the kingdom Jesus modelled and preached. The mission of Jesus was about forgiveness, healing and encouragement to follow his lead to make the world a better place, all in the context of a fairly informal Christian community.

Practise Christian Faith to all in a kind and inclusive manner to all Australians, no matter what race, sex and sexual identity. Catholic Church to apologize/ compensate and put in place practices to ensure that the crimes against children never occur again.

Update liturgy and prayer to connect with Australians young and old. Remove all obligations to attend Mass on Sundays. Alternate Mass with a communion service. Invite qualified baptised members to preach homily at Mass and communion services. Demystify liturgy by doing away with archaic vestments and practices such as incensing, and so much kneeling standing sitting Offer the other Mass participants such as altar servers, Acolytes, readers, ministers of the Eucharist to stand with the celebrant at the altar and take turns to lead some of the prayers.

To be a people faithful to the sacramental life especially Sunday Mass and regular Confession. The Pastors need to regularly invite people to come to Confession. What about having the sacrament of Confession for a short time before every Mass, even on Sunday? If there were more than one priest there could even be Confessions during Mass on Sunday in the first part of the Mass. That way many people who seldom or never go to Confession would be more likely to do so. Also children would see their parents go. To be a people of prayer. To begin Eucharistic Adoration in all our parish churches at least one hour per week. To bring back the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion to Year 2, i.e. age 7, as was done in my youth. The children these days are very with it in technology

and smart enough to prepare for the early reception of the sacraments. They need Jesus in the world; they are growing in where children are being exposed to pornography via the internet at a very young age now. To bring the children in Catholic Primary schools to Confession at least once a term and also to Mass, every week and to regular brief visits to pray with Jesus in the Tabernacle. This is necessary because most of them will not otherwise experience Confession and Mass other than at their first reception of the sacraments. Confession is very important because of the pornography on the internet. Pornography is the number one sin confessed in America and I suppose here as well. If the children experience Confession in primary school, they are more likely to continue in High School and beyond. Concerning contraception and abortion, our whole Church priest and laity need to get more active. The pastors need to speak about it periodically. In all my years of being a faithful Catholic, I haven't heard a homily on either the immorality of contraception or of abortion. There are many Catholics who believe contraception and even abortion are acceptable. Where else will we hear the truth if not in our local Church? This can be done with the reminder that God always forgives the repentant. It is very good to see advertisements for Rachel's Vineyard in parish bulletins. It would be good if the priests or even a competent layperson could speak about these topics once in a while. So many Catholics have been wounded by contraception and abortion. Most contraceptives are potentially abortifacient; yet many people are unaware of this. Also with the Theology of the Body of Saint John Paul II, there is the potential to reach the young generations with the rich beauty of the Catholic teaching on human sexuality. It would be wonderful if the Theology of the Body could be taught in all our Catholic High schools. There is so much work being done in this area and I think particularly of Jason and Christina Evert, with their booklets, DVDs and website at CHASTITYPROJECT.com. We need to get the Rosary being prayed both in the Church and also in the home to recover devotion to Mary.

To have an integrated clergy. It would be wiser to have seminarians wiser and for this reason, it is suggested that they do not enter straight from school but have some experience of life. The suggestion is to possibly be at least 25 years of age before entering and to have had a job.

That a pre-requisite for consideration to be admitted to a seminary be a University degree and /or a Trade qualification, and at least 3 years of working in the chosen field or trade. That the candidate demonstrates financial independence. That the candidate demonstrates independent living. That seminarians remain living in their local community in non-institutional settings for the initial years of their formation.

a) To adhere to EVERY recommendation to religious institutions and the Catholic Church in particular, put forward by the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse. b) Have a progressive plan for the future where the Church can integrate more seamlessly into Australian life so that more people will not turn away from the Church and so that the Church will not be left behind. c) To rethink the traditional approach to Church and for the future of the Church to be placed firmly in the hands of the more trustworthy laity.

Answering this question involves many responses. I think, that God is calling the Church today to be a more inclusive body where decisions are made by a broader representation of the Church—both men and women discerning together what our Church should be. For too long decisions and leadership roles have been the domain of the clergy and the hierarchy of the Church. Bodies such as the Bishops Conference hold sole power over the people of God to whom the Church belongs and whom the Church is. The Church is not solely the clergy and so the People of God have a right in to be part of any discernment/decision making that is necessary for the Church to move forward into the future. It is all of us together, that the Holy Spirit guides as a People of God.

To uphold and promote Christian values through education of young and old. To make our voices heard in the public square through voting for those who espouse our values, writing letters, emailing, supporting or objecting. Through praying and joining with other Christian denominations to fight for Religious freedom and so on. We need to be Disciples of Jesus by spreading the Good News ourselves and by exploring new ways of engaging young people, reaching those who have left

the Church and catechising those who do not know their faith. We need more times of organised Adoration, Benediction and anonymous Reconciliation. We need to build community through concentrating on the various age groups as well as needs of our community. We need to reach out as a community to those who are in need through having periodic collections for groups in need such as the homeless, those facing unplanned pregnancies etc. I will add further detail at the end of the submission.

Eliminate homosexuals from the priesthood and religious in accordance with longstanding Church policy and the moral law. Of 191 respondents from across Australia, 187 considered that homosexual men should not be in the priesthood.

Our study circle thinks God is asking us, as a matter of urgency, to find ways of engaging young people in the faith (both inside and outside the bricks-and-mortar Church) and hence keep our future generations in the sheepfold. As a Church, we ought to get deeper into the feedback from the youths about their faith and build some action plans to address. Some of us parents hear the following from our young people:

- Young people lose interest in the Mass because the ‘priest is boring’.
- The scandal of sexual abuse of children by some Catholic clergy is distressing and causes young people to question their trust in priests. In their peer groups, being Catholic becomes uncool.
- The normalization of pre-marital, extra-marital, same-sex relationships and the ‘culture of death’ (e.g. pro-choice, euthanasia, etc.) in a relativistic culture polarizes young people who engage in such behaviours as non-conformists who can no longer tolerate the truths of Faith (and who may sometimes banish themselves from the Church.) Addressing this issue will involve EVERYONE including, parents, schools, the government, etc. and may take generations. But with trust in the Lord, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!

1. To be a beacon of light and Truth on moral social issues

- We need to continually affirm the Church's teachings on important social issues such as abortion, contraception, reproductive technologies, euthanasia, and same-sex marriage as universally relevant to all of society today and always.

- We feel God has endowed on us the responsibility to educate both Christians and non-Christians on the philosophical, anthropological and theological basis of the Church's stance on these issues.

- Always with charity, we have to meet people where they are and through these conversations, people will see the face of God.

2. Liturgy and the sacraments

- We need to reinvigorate our love for the Holy Liturgy and the sacraments, as the “source and summit” of our interior life.

- As young people, we find many of our contemporaries are ignorant and unaware of the beauty and meaning of the Liturgy, thus have lost—or never had—the desire to participate in it.

- Re-align aspects of the Liturgy to Tradition, particularly the music and instruments used to celebrate it. Majority of parishes use music that is either distracting or lacks reverence.

- We need to improve the education of the Catholic faithful by teaching the fullness of the sacraments using the Catechism as it is.

- We call on our brother priests to be more available in providing the sacrament of confession and regular Masses. (Preferably, parishes in the same deanery having different Mass times).

3. Marriage and Family

- We, the Faithful, have a responsibility to foster a culture that encourages young people to get married (instead of cohabitating).

- We feel we have to revise our compulsory marriage preparation courses to include (i) what is marriage as a sacrament, i.e. source of grace, (ii) marriage as a vocation and means of sanctification, and (iii) marriage is lifelong.

- We need to remind married couples of their obligation to be generous in having children/being open to life and to raise their children in the Catholic faith.

- We have to be models in exhibiting the beauty of large families.

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| <p>4. Social responsibility and generosity</p> <p>—We, the Catholic Church, should be pioneers in encouraging all Australians to be generous in time and resources to those in need.</p> <p>—We have to help our brothers and sisters find hope in their suffering.</p>   |
| <p>At this point, the family unit is in big trouble: I strongly believe God is asking us to rejuvenate society by living the gospel message daily, firstly by working at having strong Catholic families, with solid relationships with our spouses. As parents and primary educators of our children we need to witness our faith, 'to walk the talk'. To show our kids that it is cool to practise our faith. We need to ingrain leadership in young people based on a spirit of service to others not on hollow dreams of narcissistic behaviour. We need good and holy priests to live and be seen to lead a life of prayer, to be available to administer the sacrament of the Eucharist in Mass at practical times every weekday not all at 9am in every parish, not just on Sundays, to encourage frequent confession. We need priests to preach fearlessly meaningful well-prepared homilies with practical advice on how the gospel of the day has meaning to our everyday life.</p>   |
| <p>I think there is a need for us Catholics to know more about our faith and how to live the faith in our everyday lives. There is ignorance about the Church teachings. It should start in the homes and the Catholic schools. Hence, parents need to be educated in the faith to be able to pass it on to their children. Catechism classes should be offered more, and formation classes as well. We need practical Talks on how we should be good Catholic parents teaching virtues to our children, talks on how we can become better spouses to each other, better friends, workers etc... Talks on how we can live our faith truly based on the teachings of Christ. We need talks that will guide us in living virtuous lives, serving the Lord with love through our everyday work. I attend monthly recollections with talks such as these, annual retreats, and formation classes given by Opus Dei priests and members. These have helped strengthen and deepen my faith as my knowledge and love for the Lord has grown. The world now offers materialism, skepticism, atheism, relativism and all the "ISMs" that go against Christ's teachings. We need our Church to guide us in the right direction. We also need more priests who will encourage confession and the sacraments and daily prayer and sacrifice. We need priests who will teach us love for the Mass and the Eucharist, priests that believe that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist.</p> |
| <p>Australia is a very diverse country. This means that there will be differences in religion, opinions and views. I think God is asking us to have a better understanding of one another. To give respect to each other's beliefs, views and opinions. If may run contrary to ones beliefs, views and opinions but at least have an openness, which will then lead to better understanding of one another.</p>   |
| <p>The secular world never cease in prosecuting us, even in the modern world. We've heard about the trial by media of our beloved clergy and Church leaders. I would admit that some are guilty of abuses. And we do not deny that. But what about those who are innocent and wrongly accused and victimized by those opportunistic money hungry people? Even in the modern times now, we being prosecuted by the secular society, I think now is the time for the Catholic Church to unite again to stop those unjust prosecution of our clergies and Church leaders. Now is the time again to show the secular authority that we are united in faith. That Faith is the highest of all in principles and opinions. This is an opportunity for us Catholic that we are One body with Christ, let the Gov't realise that. "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God". We always respect and follow that command. That is the boundary of Church and State. We are being pushed against the wall now. Let us unite and defend our faith. This state was born and established the Catholic faith, let Us maintain that. Let Us show them (Gov't) that we can eradicate those Gov't leaders whose principle is unreligious and opposed to our existence. Let us put only those people who are committed to Church, and to God and to people.</p>   |
| <p>To structure itself so that the varying talents of all Gods people are available and allowed to be used to the full cf. 1 Corinthians 12.</p>  |
| <p>—Education to the faithful of Catholic Church on the teachings of the Catholic Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o E.g. Divorced people should not receive communion (True or False)</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>—Forgiveness and Acceptance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Need to accept divorced people and Gay people.</li> <li>o How do you restore trust of the people ?</li> </ul> <p>—Need the Church to accept their Past and apologise for their misgivings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o If priest knows about criminal activities of other clergy they need to be exposed.</li> </ul> <p>—Need Transparency (Financial and Internal Workings) of what the Church has done.</p> <p>—Need acknowledgement of country (Aboriginal) at every Mass or gathering.</p> <p>—Need to publish Church’s Financial Distribution.</p> <p>—Transparency as a way to build trust.</p> <p>—Ad Blitz to inform public of what the Church is doing to address shortcomings.</p>   |
| <p>I think he is asking us to be more inclusive and open minded towards everyone.</p>  |
| <p>To make our Church more relevant in bringing ourselves and others to God. The Church needs to be more vocal in social issues affecting Australia. To be more "hands-on" in living our faith. To be ready to forgive the sinner but also to call out the sins of this generation</p>   |
| <p>1. To be a light to the nations. 2. To not be afraid. 3. To return to being a Church of humility, as Jesus established it. 4. To recognise and value the voices of women as having prime importance in the Church. Jesus appointed Mary of Magdala as the first witness to the Resurrection. 5. To recognise that some Church structures and practices evolved away from their origins e.g. That priests should be unmarried. Peter was married.</p>  |
| <p>A more inclusive Church, which provides opportunities for contribution and participation of members of all ages, especially the young. In particular, I would recommend the restoration of the Third Rite of Reconciliation. I have experienced the wonderful response when this option was first introduced into a parish. We held this twice a year—before Christmas and Easter. We had a rather big Church but there was standing room only, particularly because of the presence of younger people (e.g. below 25). This was the case right up until the permission for the Rite was withdrawn. Thereafter, when we did hold a type of communal reconciliation twice a year as before—the numbers dwindled markedly. This rite does not replace the 1st/2nd rites but it keeps the community together on an ongoing basis and stresses something which those other rites do not—that our sins are not just ours but affect our community as well and prating , expressing sorrow, etc. as a big group emphasises this very basic truth. Please bring back the Third Rite for more than just "too large for individual confession to be feasible".</p>   |
| <p>To develop a personal relationship with Jesus, to know Jesus and love Jesus as the number one priority in your life.</p>  |
| <p>Some Key books through which I think God is showing us the way forward, challenging us to think more holistically, more broadly, more laterally, are: Worship and the New Cosmology—Catherine Vincie, The Heart of Christianity—Marcus Borg, Blue Sky God—The Evolution of Science and Christianity—Don MacGregor, Emergence for Life, Not Fall from Grace—Kevin Treston, A New Harmony—The Spirit, The Earth, and The Human Soul—J Phillip Newell, The Wisdom Jesus—Transforming Heart and Mind—A New Perspective on Christ and His Message—Cynthia Bourgeault, The Divine Dance—Richard Rohr (and has a wealth of other wisdom in other books also), Field of Compassion—How the New Cosmology is Transforming Spiritual Life—Judy Cannato, The Way of the Wind—The Path and Practice of Evolutionary Christian Mysticism—Bruce Sanguin, Australia Reimagined—Towards a more compassionate, less anxious society—Hugh Mackay.</p> <p>1. To listen closely and deeply to each other. God wants this active bold open listening to occur—not only in the Church and in the lead up to and during the big PC 2020 / PC2021 events but also throughout society, in all leadership positions and in all relationships. See my personal story below.</p> <p>2. Care for the environment. Pope Francis has picked up on the themes for the Church and the world. These themes have been now running for many years but need leadership such as his—and action. God cares about our whole world—we are part of and come from the earth and are dependent upon it.</p> |

Ordain married men and women to the priesthood. Mandate all priests to attend future plenary sessions to learn how laity think. Each priest to do a compulsory OPD each year run by speech experts on effective public speaking with practical testing. A failure should result in withdrawal of preaching faculties until a pass is gained. A compulsory one-week pastoral update for all priests on the teaching of Pope Francis and the annual the Catholic Social Justice Council statements. A money manager for 4-5 parish groupings, groups of parishioners to assist the dying, and a mandated day each week for priests to have uninterrupted time to prepare homilies that are short, relevant to life of the people, and reflective of the thinking of contemporary pastoral theology. Also priests to be made aware of boundaries in counselling roles. I think the main problem for the Church is middle management—priests. The bishops are OK and the people are open, but we are frustrated by clergy that are defensive, closed-minded, tired, and lacking transparency in their relationship with laity. To use an airline analogy, the deanery pilots and passengers are keen, the chairperson is onside, but the air traffic controllers (parish priests) have gone on holidays. A nearby parish without a priest had a religious sister in charge for 12 months. The parish bloomed—reflections were prepared and relevant, lay people were fully involved, and children and adolescents reported finding some meaning in the Church. Time for the clergy to back off and let the people really step forward—we are better educated than most priests, more in tune with contemporary Church thinking, more practical, better able to work together with people, open to re-evaluate practices that need to be more effective, and in general, better emotionally integrated human beings. This latter remark is not to put priests down—they could do with a personal psychological counsellor—preferably female—to help them become more open and less defensive. A monthly retreat and a weekly day off could also benefit our pastors. They need to change.

1. Priesthood of the laity and the nature of priesthood. There are too few priests. We should have married priests and women priests. We need laity and women being able to make decisions about the Church and hold official positions, such as Deacon. 2. Adult education about faith. Older people need education about changes in the Church, e.g.: divorced people are able to receive the sacraments, missing Mass is not a mortal sin. People need to be taught to think for themselves. The Church puts a lot of resources into education of children and youths. There is a gap in adult faith education. The Church needs to provide opportunities for people to extend their education about faith. The weekly sermon is just not enough. We can't solve the problems with the same kind of thinking that created them. 3. Parish. The structure of society has changed—more women working; time and distance; people are more self-centred. We need to create a sense of community. Perhaps reorganise the structure of the Church to meet people's needs. Is PARISH the solution? We should look at models of Church other than parish. 4. Spirituality and the environment. The Church should give us an integrated spirituality, which gives us the imperative to care for creation. 5. The language in liturgies should be inclusive.

God is asking us to respect those around us, no matter how different they are compared to us. He also wants us to spread His word through love and joy, not hate. He is calling young people to share their faith and for older people to make the world a place in which young people can do this freely.

The purpose of the Church, founded by Jesus Christ and led by his Apostles after Pentecost, and guided by the Holy Spirit, and governed by their successors, the Pope and the bishops—through millennia to the end of time, is to provide a pathway for people to get to heaven. Provide a pathway to Salvation—sacraments and the Word Essential to this pathway are the sacraments, and the conveying of knowledge of the truths of the faith. What is right and wrong, the importance of the sacraments and their generous distribution by Christ's ministers—the priests. A great emphasis must be put on the sacrament of the mercy of Christ—Reconciliation or Confession, which gives rise to the worth reception of the Eucharist—Christ Himself—and a more balanced approach to life. It would seem that the number of psychiatric and psychological cases that abound in this country is in inverse proportion to the number of Confessions administered. Need to know what our beliefs are. We need to have an informed Catholic population who know what they believe, and the reason for it. You cannot love what you do not know. The knowledge of the Catholic religion by Catholics in this

country is negligible. Religion taught in schools is realistically deficient, and we have to fight for our rights to stop the totalitarian approach by some politicians of banning the teaching of religion from state schools though it be one period once a week. The responsibility of the Laity to give Christian solutions to societal issues. The laity need to be assisted to realise that they can give glory to God in and through their work, that they can be a force for good in the society at large and in the local community. The sacrament of baptism or Christian initiation brings with it the responsibility to evangelise and bring others back to the Church. It is not a matter of only assisting the priest at the Mass, only a few can do this—they have the responsibility through their prayer and sacrifice, their ability and professional prestige of bringing others close to Christ. Thereby enhancing parish life in the end. A Church of Prayers. We need to become a more spiritual Church, open to all, not through compromise of belief, but through charity and understanding and spreading the truth. Hence study, prayer, the sacraments are essential. The laity have to be a support to the priests, and not judges. The celibacy of the priesthood is a gift that we must all safeguard. A practical issue with the parish community—Who does the priest give their priority to? Do the parish priests specialise in looking after the elderly and retired with the 9.00am weekday Masses or does it provide the sacraments for the workers and youths with 6.00am weekday Masses?

Signs that change is needed: 1. Some Gospel values are lacking, e.g., full male/female equality, including lay/cleric equality. 2. Some Vatican II teachings are not in practice, e.g., shared responsibility of clerics and laity, the latter not exercising baptismal, priestly role; top-heavy management of the Church; bishops having had their authority watered down by “obedience” to the Vatican; Canon Law out of touch in some aspects with the modern world; evangelisation hindered by lack of reform, and response to cultures. There are limited initiatives towards ecumenism. 3. Many people alienated and lost to the Church, e.g. former priests, divorced and separated couples, significant numbers of women and youths, people of different sexual orientation from the majority. 4. Lack of vitality and joy in the Liturgy, e.g., moving backward from pastoral concerns for language in the Mass to unnecessary, strict translation of the Latin, resulting in stilted language imposed upon the faithful. 5. Priesthood in crisis: more work for fewer; tired, burned-out priests trying to do everything in management and pastoral needs; lack of accountability for use of money or decisions made which affect the people; lack of homily preparation; temptation to laziness; loneliness; the present great shame caused by clerical abuse of children. 6. Lack of vision, growth in theology for all, regarding our place in the cosmos and care of the earth. There are pockets of this, but it’s not generally shared. 7. Spirituality often limited to “God and me” e.g. expressed in old devotions or homilies that limit/omit the social justice dimension of the Gospel. Action needed:- 1. Reform of attitudes and structures to root out clericalism (the idea that the clerical state is superior to the lay state), to restore all in the Church to discernment of Spirit-given gifts, and the freedom to exercise them, whether male or female, for the building up of the People of God. 2. Reform of priestly selection and training practices. (Could mean no seminaries; male and female priests in a different model.) Making clerical celibacy optional; facilitating married clergy, including former clergy. 3. Creation of representative bodies to whom priests, bishops and pope will be accountable and transparent. 4. Reform of Canon Law to prevent abuse of power, and of Theology of Sexuality to foster healthy attitudes to God-given human sexuality. 5. Have women in representation, consultation and decision-making in all levels of Church life. 6. Reform of Liturgy to reflect Vatican II Teachings. 7. Introduce or improve communication of visionary teachings to the people e.g. Vatican II teachings, writings of Pope Francis.

Teach Catholics to follow the Ten Commandments. These commandments were summarised by Jesus in His teachings. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22:33-40.

I think God is asking the Church to focus more on formation of souls, children ,seminarians ,young adults, couples considering marriage and older people who have not been formed since they were at school are very ignorant of the beauty of our faith. Firstly, the centre of our lives is the Eucharist but churches are closed so we cannot make a visit during the day and this is not being taught that

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| <p>children walk past their church twice a day and do not visit Our Lord. The excuse of robbery is not acceptable in today's technological age as screens and alarms can be installed as a deterrent as we have seen in some churches. Proper reception of Holy Communion is also lacking with some Eucharistic ministers not knowing what to do with the host when a person does not put their hands out to receive. Silence has almost gone in some churches after Mass and older people seem to have forgotten what we grew up with, big signs need to be prominent to remind people who is in the Tabernacle and the respect for people who want to pray in silence. Teachers in Catholic schools need more formation e.g. Humane Vitae and the respect for life, marriage as a sacrament, daily prayer life, Mass and sacramental life etc. Teachers cannot teach what they don't practice just like when a parent says "do what I say not what I do " it doesn't work as we have seen in the last approx. 40 years. Homilies should be about gospel of the day but centred on the Catechism and instruction given regarding how the Catholic Church adheres to scriptures. Fourth Lateral council directed clergy to give teaching sermons at Mass. Extra devotions to patron of church or Our Lady is also very important for spiritual life. Youth groups in particular need formation and they can amalgamate two or more parishes so speakers can visit and give inspirational talks. Information seminars given for families are also sorely needed. Some parishes give examples when you walk in the door of what is suitable dress code this is very important as is seen some people have no idea and who will tell them if we don't. Everybody goes to Communion but when we ask them about their last Confession, they have no idea. The Church has a lot of work to do in instructing people about the sacraments which are the root of interior life. Lastly, Holy Hours and Eucharistic Adoration need to be centre of parish life, when this is diminished parish flounders.</p> |
| <p>To be honest towards our belief. Do the right thing what your faith is by joining an organization where God is the Centre of the topic. Be bold being a member of a group. Evangelize or encourage people to live a happy life with our God. Encourage children in their early days to live with faith by teaching them the important of prayer and attending Mass. Have devotion to our self in that way we live faithfully with our God.</p>  |
| <p>I think God is asking us to be prepared to proclaim that we believe in the 'one, holy, catholic, apostolic' Church and its teachings, in the face of very difficult times today in Australia. By that, I mean not to throw out what is good and important to us, as practising Catholics, because of the evil things that have happened. I think it is more important now than ever, for us to be strong and united in our faith, to build a better and stronger Church in Australia. I also believe we particularly need to reach out to young adults who have stopped practising their faith.</p>   |
| <p>To make the Church more inclusive and human. Two examples of how it is not either of these is firstly the fact that clergy do not have spouses/families. The second is that leadership roles are held by men. I find this impossible to understand in an institution that is trying to be relevant provide inspiration and guidance for its members.</p>  |
| <p>1. Unity in diversity: diversity is a richness in our Catholic Faith. However, if we don't approach it with unity purpose and expression it becomes a weakness. For example, the contradictory stances of the clergy concerning the vote on the marriage act. This was unacceptable and divisive. 2. Formation and education: these need to be implemented and given to the young and old according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. 3. Homilies and preaching: priests and nuns need to always refer to the teachings of the Catholic Church to educate the laity about her richness and historical value. 4. Eucharistic Adoration: all Australian churches need to go back to more frequent Eucharistic Adoration. It is the only hope of unity and peace in this world. 5. To dedicate Australia to the heart of Our Lady (as the bishops in the UK are doing in 2020).</p>   |
| <p>The Catholic Church in Australia needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Improve the teaching of the Catholic faith in diocesan schools. Most teachers in Catholic schools have very weak knowledge and are unable to effectively teach students;</li> <li>—Emphasise the need for ongoing formation (intellectual and spiritual). After big events such as WYD or ACYF, young Catholics often wane in their faith due to lack of ongoing formation provided to them. There should be regular formation events at the parish and diocesan level to engage the</li> </ul>  |

youths intellectually with great depth. High energy youths events such as praise and worship, and games are often short-term solutions, but need to be backed up by strong doctrinal teaching to sustain the youths' faith in the long term;

—Go back to basics with Catholicism. Instead of focusing on “innovating” our sacraments and Church, there needs to be a renewed understanding of the Catholic faith, history, tradition and identity. The Church has such rich history and theology that needs to be properly examined and communicated before we can discuss “innovation”. Particularly with regard to the Liturgy. A lot of older people seem to think that the only way to get young people to go to Mass is to modernise the Mass. This is wrong as a lot of my friends and I love the traditional Mass, and we wish that liturgical traditions were more widespread;

—Improve our understanding of the hierarchy of the Church, the proper role of the priesthood, role of men and women in the Church, and the overall body of Christ. I am strongly against the movement for females to be ordained as priests, as I believe it is pushed by hard feminists in the community wishing to impose secular and erroneous ideas into the Church. Rather, the question should be answered in light of the Church's longstanding teachings and traditions;

—Better form ourselves and leaders within faith communities. Often, youths leaders or lay Church leaders are put in positions where they are teaching others about the faith but are severely mal-formed themselves. This can lead to confusion and lack of clarity on Church doctrine, and bring about the potential for heresy to spread;

—Clean up sexual abuse. There should be better, more transparent processes in reporting abuse. There should also be strict vetting of seminarians who wish to enter the priesthood—ensure that they are psychologically sound and are not harbouring deep-seated homosexual tendencies which will affect their ministry. Confessionals with a wall in between confessor and penitent should be brought back.

—Men's groups in parishes should be encouraged as I think there are a lot of men out there who need that sense of fraternity and community amongst themselves, to improve their mental health.

Prayers—unity—peace—commitment to faith maintain traditions despite rapid changes of society—the meaning of “Catholic schools”. Maintain the core Catholic studies to be in line with the Catechism and not based on personal opinions—bishops who are out of line and preach the truth and not personal opinions.

For Christian unity, growing together in our faith as a family in our own parishes/community. It is very disturbing when there are priests who don't follow the Pope. For the Church to continue to be honest about the abuses perpetrated especially by the religious order (i.e. no more covering up). If a priest is "doubtful", remove him from his post; don't take risk. Marriage preparation classes and ongoing support for married couples. Free retreats. Something like a WYD that is Australia-based, preferably on an annual basis. For the youths to be able to grow in their faith and meet like-minded people. Catechism classes to be a strong focus/offering of the Church. More serious preparation to prepare candidates to receive the Sacred Eucharist. Having gone through twice with my own children, I felt that the content was very shallow and if the child missed a lesson, they could still go ahead and receive their 1st holy communion. This shouldn't be the case because it is a serious matter. All Catholic schools should have a Church/chapel in the campus to allow young people to go to Mass as frequently as they wish. Also to make available priests for young people who wish to seek spiritual guidance, or go to confession. Priests should be more visible in Catholic schools like visiting classes on a periodical basis (even once a term) and to hold meditations for students. Focus on the sacrament of confession should be brought back. The importance of this is not often talked about in school, church, etc. Classes to deepen faith should be provided, parish-based to give opportunity to people to ask questions and seek answers. Bring back the powerful rosary. Maybe ads to have more devotion to Mary. Apostolate to elderly especially those who are not in the faith to give them the chance to know the Truth (maybe visit to Aged care facilities). Definitely a NO for same sex marriage.

1. Transparency in the Church. 2. No cover up in cases of sexual abuse. Abusers need to be reported to proper authorities prescribed by law. 3. More strict and regular psychological screening of religious people.

To be united more in our faith. As a Catholic community, it's very important to go back to our spiritual roots and the Catholic teachings needs to be explained and detailed clearly to all and I believe that God is asking us to be strong Catholics and to never fear standing up for our Catholic faith and the teaching of the Church. Also, I think that we need to trust more in the plan of life and to include God in our daily life and practices.

I think God is asking us to put the Church's teachings into practice in relation to sexual abuse by the clergy. I believe that we should continue to support members of the clergy who are found to be guilty of abuse. However, I am not aware of any support offered to the victims. When I attend Mass, I understand that part of the collection goes towards the support of the clergy. I accept that a very small number of those recipients are guilty of abuse or other crimes. Our faith teaches us that we all fail because we are human. I choose to believe that people guilty of such behaviour need to be loved and supported, even though this behaviour makes them our enemy. Our faith teaches us that God's forgiveness is infinite. I am more than happy to continue to give to the Church for the support of clergy. Just as important to me, is the need to love and support the victims. It hurts me that the Church doesn't appear to be acknowledging victims. Or when it does, is not backing up the words with action. We know the teaching that God is a shepherd who protects all his sheep. We know that we are all God's children, and the principle of family is that no one is favoured or loved more than the other. Therefore, we must reach out and support victims of abuse at the hands of the clergy, otherwise we are hypocrites. Victims of abuse need to be financially supported by the Church so that parishioners and those outside the faith believe that the Church is sincere in its condemnation of abuse. The Church also needs to do this because it follows God's teachings: admit guilt, acknowledge human weakness, ask for forgiveness, protect the abused and live a life of truth, out of the darkness of lies. Victims of abuse need to be supported financially to at least the same measure that we are supporting our clergy. Of course, the support needs to be emotional and physiological, and this can be unlocked with financial support as the foundation. I have no idea of the number of victims of abuse at the hands of clergy. Whatever the number is, the Church must do the figures to make a fair compensation system available. If cuts to spending in other areas of the Church are necessary to make this financially viable, then these tough decisions must be made. Spending on such things as new building works, or maintenance can never be as important as spending on the flesh and blood of the Church, its members. The Church must forget about the legal advice to deny guilt and limit exposure to legal action. This approach is not in line with God's teachings. The Church needs to be as radical and revolutionary as Jesus was during his time on earth. It is my sincere belief parishioners will support a genuine attempt at forgiveness by the Church, spiritually and financially.

Live a good prayerful life and put God above all things and love and assist one's family and those in need.

I think God is asking for a more authentic Church, a sacramental Church. Everyone seeks meaning in life and is always looking for purpose. Jesus Christ is love; and he only, gives meaning to life. A Church focused on the sacraments is a Church focused on Christ, as the sacraments are instruments of God's love for us. I think the Church in Australia needs to focus more on the sacraments, rather than secondary matters such as 'inviting' liturgies (being partly important as well). Having the sacraments readily available for instance, means people can encounter God more frequently. I would love to see greater time devoted to the sacrament of confession. In my diocese and neighbouring ones, confession is only advertised once a week for about 1 hr (excluding appointments). If my parish were to have longer/more frequent confession schedules, I think the people of God would be much better off. Another suggestion is a renewal of reverent, more fervent liturgies, such as the Holy Mass. I am not suggesting Traditional Latin Mass at all our parishes. However, I am suggesting more reverence and sacredness in the way we conduct our liturgies, as the tradition of the Church is a beautiful thing which young people find attractive. From experience, a

lack of understanding is the reason people don't find reverent/more sacred liturgies attractive. Thus, a little bit of explanation and education can go a long way in deepening people's faith. I would also like to suggest more formation and pastoral support for our priests. Our priests are under a lot of pressure, especially in our parishes to 'please' the community and conduct their pastoral activities without any hiccups. Priests seem to be afraid to preach 'hard' teachings in our parishes due to the potential consequences from the community. I think bishops need to support and encourage strong preaching that will change hearts and souls. Finally, I think the Church needs to return Christ to our Catholic schools. Along with our parishes, our schools need to be communities alive with the sacraments! Having Holy Mass, but equally as important, the sacrament of confession available at our schools is crucial. Kids need to encounter Christ, and Christ is present in the sacraments. To sum up, the Church needs to come back to Christ. Christ instituted the sacraments as an instrument of his love to his people. The Church does not need fancy marketing plans. All the Church needs to do is let Christ shine alone and he will draw people's hearts to him. Like Mary and St John, at the foot of the Cross, we need to remain close to Christ (even in these tough times), because it is Christ alone that changes hearts and souls.

I feel that God wants his children to come back to him. We have wandered away from him, our society promoted debauchery, abortion and euthanasia, all the while trying to destroy our Church. The State and media have put doubt into the minds of many Catholics whose faith, at best, was shaky by making the Church look evil. We need to Re-evangelise those Catholics that are on the fringe of their faith and show them the truth of the word God and Jesus Christ gave us. We need to continue to be strong and proactive in saving the souls of the mothers (and the lives of their unborn children), who feel and believe that they have no other choice. We need to continue to maintain and promote the sanctity of the family as God intended. We need to promote that parents are the primary educators of children and not the State. Our children are being targeted and taught by the State that LGBTQIA is normal, when there is no science or anything in nature to prove that it is. Where the Church is being attacked for the crimes committed against children, it must now defend the thousands of children from the abuse that will be state sanctioned. The Church, Catholic schools and all other faith-based schools need to be prepared for the attack on the values that we hold and their existence, because of our faith. We need to be able to teach our faith and beliefs within our Catholic schools without the state forcing their teachings that are challenging our principles.

God is asking for all human races to be faithful to Him. Follow His teachings; be holy as your Father in heaven is holy. We are weak, that is why we need God in our lives to give us strength. Promote reverence to Holy Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ. Every Catholic should know What Happens at Mass. Teach about sacrifice and virtue of patience especially to young generation. Let every Catholic know about Our Blessed Mother Mary's role in the Redemption and why should we give her the highest honour as the Mother of Jesus. Encourage every Catholic to be part of a Ministry in the Church or be a part of a Church organisation as we are all called to be disciple of Christ. Give emphasis to couples who are to marry what is involved in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Remind Catholics about the 7 sacraments, Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Encourage every family to pray the Rosary together with their children. Catholics should be reminded of the Third Person of God, the Holy Spirit.

Protect and strengthen the Domestic Church (the family). The leaders of the Church must lead and the Laity must cooperate and actively work to build the family. Love and Faith in God must be the centre of family's formation starting with marriage of couples by understanding the sacrament of Matrimony and how this sacrament help in our sanctification. Married couple is the beginning of family life who is responsible in building the foundation of Catholic faith. God-centred family contribute to bring harmony, stability and peace to the community that will benefit the society. From childhood we learn moral values; love, honour and faith in God. Married couples must be open to life, must be prepared to bring children into the world. According to St Thomas Aquinas..."we derive three things from our parents, namely "existence," "nourishment," and "education." Evangelise to married and those contemplating to enter the sacrament of Matrimony that the union

of marriage seeks above all else to supply new members of the Church and to prepare them for union with God in Heaven. Continue to inculcate this teaching all throughout the stages of marital union not just during pre-marriage seminar, especially in these times of great secularism and busyness in the life of parents/couples who get caught up in the attractions of modern family life. Laity must learn and know thy faith and share it. The laity must understand the gospel. In these times where those who stand for the Truth of the Gospel face a lot of ridicule and persecution, the laity in Australia must stand together especially those who belong to Church organisations, to protest peacefully, to oppose anything contrary to Gospel teaching. We must be visible to society and proclaim God in public. As Christians, we share the love of God to our brothers and sisters and respect those who belong to the homosexual community. As a believer and as to what my faith teaches me, homosexual "marriage" stands contrary to true marriage, as homosexual unions are intrinsically barren. Teach to our children that GOD must be first. I think that GOD is asking us (Catholic Church in Australia) to be the voice of God in society of today, to proclaim His Word, stand by His Truth, and show the Way to Christ Who is the Life. We are faced with many issues, are we for God or against God? Do we obey God or do we please ourselves?

I think the Church needs to be more visible, more vocal, and more active in how Australian live their every day lives. Through social media, through politics, through sports, through education. Especially in local governments. We should be more vocal in supporting our fellow Christian sport people who are left out to be attacked by Satan's followers. People like, Israel Folau, Margaret Court. If the Church had a voice of support for these people when they were being abused for standing up for Christ teaching, I am sure many more Christian people like them would not be afraid to come out and voice their support. The mentality of tolerance and quite peaceful people is doing more damage than good. And Cardinal Pell is a great example. If God is with us, then have no fear. May God bless this Council.

To stop trying to be 'popular' and rediscover the amazing depth of Scriptures, tradition and moral teachings. This will require seminarians and teachers to learn from teachers, who know their stuff, believe and practice their faith, and teach it faithfully. (This is a no brainer, but sadly almost completely missing at present.) To stop being partisan or tribal (conservative/liberal) and join in promoting the good of every human being, from conception to natural death, primarily by providing practical help at the local level for those struggling in life, especially the most vulnerable. To stand up for refugees, the frail and vulnerable, disabled, elderly, or sick people. To assist people find suitable homes and jobs so that we care for their human dignity, not just their bodies. To provide excellent liturgies in beautiful sanctuaries, worthy of God's greatness, but not get so precious about details that we drive people away. To encourage local Bible studies where laity can rediscover the rich relationship with God in daily conversation with God in Scripture and prayer. To stop pretending Catholic schools are Catholic when their teaching and practice do not match it. Most of all, to not allow this opportunity (the Plenary) to be hijacked by old campaigners who are embittered from decades of ecclesial in-fighting. We don't want to allow this to be a re-run of their tired and worn out battles (from either end of the spectrum). To explore the possibilities of lay people assisting in parishes, NOT to replace the priest or his liturgical/sacramental ministries, but to free him up for those ministries.

I think God is asking us to become more spiritually aware of our responsibility to contribute and participate in the healing process the Catholic Community is currently undergoing. To humbly reflect and understand the how and the why we have been forced to face a fall from grace to rebuild a new and better future for our community. Irrespective of where we each sit along the Catholic hierarchical ladder, every one of us (to some degree), small or large, pledged a vow of devotion to help, guide, strengthen and serve our fellow comrades, our children, family, friends and community. We each have a duty of care, to act with thoughtfulness, humility, courage and love to be a part of the solution. From the Laity, the priests, the bishops, archbishops, cardinals and our most Holy Pope Francis, I believe God's Mercy shall endure if we are united in all our undertakings to redeem God's

will. Only then will the doors open and a brighter shining light will reveal the new pathway forward. I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I do not presume to know the mind of God except through listening to the Spirit expressed in my own conscience and in the thoughts of God's People. Based on my own reflections and the thoughts of others with whom I have met, I believe that what God wants is for all of his people to "have life and have it to the full". This can only happen when we are in healthy relationships with each other and with our God. The Church, I believe, ought to be the means whereby people can come to God and support each other throughout the journey of life. At present, the Catholic Church in Australia is failing to do this. Ever diminishing numbers of people are affiliated with parish life and the vast majority of young people see the Church as either irrelevant to them or a hypocritical and judgemental organization with which they do not wish to be associated. I believe God wants the Church in Australia (and throughout the world) to change radically. In my view, the Church must:

- \*Develop a model of governance that is inclusive and receptive to the genuine participation of the laity. The Church needs to engage with the world and not hide behind notions of Canon Law. It needs to be open and transparent so that the shocking cover-ups associated with the sexual abuse crisis can never be repeated.
- \*Reject clericalism and broaden the notion of priesthood to encompass all (women, married people and same-sex attracted people). This will allow priesthood in Australia to once again be "home grown" rather than reliant on recruits from overseas who do not have fluent and understandable English and come from cultures which are very different from our own from our own and whose spirituality does not resonate with the vast majority of Australian Catholics.
- \* Reject the notion that same sex attracted people are "intrinsically disordered" and recognize that God made them and loves them as they are.

To know, love and serve Him—to know God. That our priests are trained and immersed in the Word of God so they personally live the Word, study the Word and teach and love the Word. That the believers of the faith in Catholic university theological departments teach seminarians their deep knowledge of scripture. That homilies might reflect this knowledge and teach on to the laity. That priests have no fear of teaching the Word. That Bible studies abound in local parishes—not DVD American series but heartfelt local teaching and learning to know God. That atriums for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd be available for parishes with the available trained laity to run them. That formation extends beyond the early sacraments at primary school. Perhaps separating Confirmation until mid-teens so solid formation can be given to older inquiring minds and then continued by youth events. To love. True charity in the Church for the people of God's creation. That abuse be exposed and cease. That Catholics be seen to assist in local disasters and times of trouble and places of need. That those who hate the Church see more than distant liturgy and expensive buildings, they see grass root action and physical love performed in the name of the Church. It takes individuals building relationships to achieve such trust but to have the Church not just behind such individuals but beside, ahead and under, leading and supporting members in their works of charity. That we love the rich history of our faith and maintain that richness in our liturgies, our beautiful sacred Churches (not multi-purpose spaces) and in our priests and consecrated. That we see all priests and consecrated set apart by their "uniform" and faithfully support them. To serve. As individuals in our parishes in big and small, weekly and irregular tasks. To serve our priests as they serve us. But not to insist on laity having "parts" in the liturgy that are actually interruptions to our rich liturgy. To not demand our priests are married and therefore compromised in commitment to both Church and their wife. To serve our community to build rapport and re-establish the broken trust that is currently out there. To serve one another with forgiveness, generosity and love. To serve by following God's commandments and letting His will be our guide rather than secular achievement.

God is asking us to return to a simpler Church, one that is less powerful, less hierarchical and less secretive; there is a need to return to the values of Christ, to be more like Him and in so doing to make God present in our world.

What we believe God is asking of us in the Australian Catholic Church can be summarised into 3 main topics: • More reverence in the Mass—Eucharist received on the tongue, traditional hymns

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| <p>and chants, proper dress code. • More encouragement for males to come forward to become acolytes and less of a reliance on Extraordinary Ministers. • A revival of Catholic teaching in Catholic schools and during Mass (homilies)—teaching of the catechism. Please refer to the attached document for further detail.</p>  |
| <p>To follow his path more consistently, especially the clergy who have been 'bad shepherds' to their parishioners by adopting politically correct stances on social issues such as same sex marriage and illegal refugees.</p>  |
| <p>Evangelisation. Time and again in Scripture we see people transformed and healed by their personal encounter with Jesus. This is not something that happened only back then, but it happens now. Many of us have our own stories of encountering Jesus and having our lives changed by his love. For many Catholics, this is a foreign concept—God is far away, and faith is not much more than a set of rules to follow. When we meet God as someone who is close to us, and loves us, we're set free to follow him with joy. In this context, we think God is asking us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Form parishes that are focused on evangelization as a priority.</li> <li>—Embrace opportunities for evangelization such as Alpha; parish prayer groups; retreats, etc.</li> <li>—Form small groups in parishes (Bible study groups, prayer groups, outreach / pastoral support) as a way of building small communities of love to which people can be invited.</li> <li>—Go deeper in our relationships with fellow parishioners—to really love one another, and therefore form genuine community that non-Church-goers will be attracted to.</li> <li>—Provide more opportunities for faith formation and development. Help Catholics appreciate the sacraments more, in the context of a personal relationship with Jesus.</li> <li>—Support our parish priests through genuine friendship.</li> </ul> <p>Engaging young people. It is a struggle for parents to keep their children and teenagers interested in Church and the Mass. We need to find ways to make Mass more accessible for children and young people. It is a testimony to the failure of how we do "Church as usual" that, after receiving their sacraments, so few children and their parents come back to do Church with us. In this context, we think that God is asking us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Become creative about how the Mass is celebrated.</li> <li>—Update our songbooks to add contemporary music—e.g. Matt Maher, Casting Crowns.</li> <li>—Use a variety of tools to communicate (YouTube, personal testimony during Mass)—we each have different learning styles—audio, visual, etc.</li> <li>—Empower lay people to take on various forms of ministry that will help young people, for example: A) Family groups, B) Children's ministry, C) Small groups that foster fellowship, D) Teaching parents how to pray together as a family, E) Groups that non-Church parents, who are bringing their children to sacramental formation, can be invited to join and feel like they are part of a relational community.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Reforming the organizational structure of the Church to minimize child sexual abuse in the future. Increasing the number of priests locally. Re-engaging with young people to encourage them to attend Mass and participate in the community.</p>   |
| <p>More women in powerful positions in the Church. More care for our unique environment that God gave us. More community involvement to improve the problem of social isolation in Australia. More parent involvement in Catholic schools. More respect and power for our limited number of nuns.</p>  |
| <p>At this time in Australia, I think God is asking us to love him and love one another by not judging one another and not excluding anyone.</p>   |
| <p>Marriage: We think God is asking us in Australia to Treasure the sacredness of marriage, thereby bringing life, love and security to spouses and children in families to grow in holiness. That parishes develop extensive formation programs discerning the vocation of marriage for individuals especially in the day to day living with external pressures and influences of the secular culture. Part of this formation should raise the dignity of 'man' and 'fatherhood'. Children grow up in families and need to look up to their own fathers for assurance of love and security. The woman's dignity needs to be uplifted in this formation to emphasise that the 'mother' is the Heart of the family. Schools: That the bishops will oppose and take a stand in the Australian Church and will not incorporate the newly</p>  |

developed sexualized curriculum, as in 'The Safe School Program' in Our Catholic Schools. Such teachings are forming the children into sexual objects and hence increasing the suicide rate due to the consequences that accompany that lifestyle. For transgender students in schools to have proper help and counselling before accommodating them, accepting and giving them separate bathrooms to use. That every young person will know that that they are made in the image of God and Loved by God. That SRE is still taught in State Schools. More emphasis on the word of God being explained in Religion lessons, and having teachers that practice their faith. To have speakers in Catholic secondary schools to educate the youths on: Theology of the body, Self-worth and respect, Relationships, Morality, Abortion and Euthanasia. Education on these matters will save our youths on much depression and suicide. Parishes: That each parish needs to have youth leaders to welcome, invite and involve the youths in the parish. To have formation programs to discern a consecrated vocation. For Seminarians to have spiritual and emotional formation and mentally examined. Parishes to have more Adoration time for parishioners as in Adoration Chapels. More prayer groups to explain the word of God, and become a part of a community. That celibacy will be maintained by priests and religious as a 'Higher Love' for God and his people as it is too difficult to serve both masters, e.g. people in a parish and a family.

We should consider and set about accepting the findings of the Vatican council, for example, 1. Third rite of reconciliation, which could solve the problem of Confession and abuse. 2. Return to the Vatican council Mass we had before these latest changes. 3. Mandatory parish councils and a proportion of female membership a must. 4. Even more important, diocesan councils to advise bishops with equal membership of women = a must in view of the Synod on Abuse in February last in Rome. 5. Bishops must be accountable and transparent as far as the faithful are concerned. 6. Ordination to the priesthood—Students should not be accepted from school—minimum age of entry after completing a professional degree is preferable. 7. We should do something to obtain more priests, a. restore men who have been forced to leave the priesthood to marry, b. they could continue in the profession they are engaged in and say Mass on Sundays or more often if possible, c. look at the celibate priesthood—make it optional, d. Ordination of older married or retired men, e. I have a friend who is a married man and a priest in the [Eastern rite] Catholic Church in [ - ] and is a lecturer in law at [ - ] university. The faithful must not be deprived of the EUCHARIST because of the law of Celibacy. Please can we have some imagination in this regard? A married priesthood would influence the importance of Religious life in the Church. 8. The Church should look at the laws of the Church concerning marriage and divorced Catholics and advertise them among the faithful. So many of us have relatives and friends who are in happy second marriages not approved by the Church but I am sure that in the eyes of God they are accepted. Many of these people continue to practise their Religion and bring up children in the Church. 9. The sacrament of confirmation should be for a mature Catholic on request. The sacrament of Confession and the Eucharist should also be delayed until children understand them in faith not as a kind of magic (maybe this also needs looking at in view of sexual abuse and the power young children see in the priest). Could this also be linked with abuse and clericalism? 10. This may also lighten the burden on young people experimenting with their sexualism. Our Church seems to have been obsessed with sex and masturbation in the confessional. Has been the fear of many when approaching the confessional, another reason for the Third Rite of Reconciliation.

As a Church, we must reach out to the wider society. As a Church, we must reach out to people of other faiths. We must be out-reaching, not turned in on ourselves. Yes, we have major internal issues to address, but many of these are best done in consultation with others, using the best available resources, including scientific, secular and interfaith. We must promote and practice the Church's teaching on interreligious dialogue. This has been developed over the last 60 years or so, but is hardly ever mentioned from the pulpit. It needs to be made known. The teaching on interreligious dialogue needs to be promoted to seminarians, pastors, teachers, catechists and especially congregations. The latter live and work among people of other faiths. They need to be encouraged to engage with them as people of faith encountering people of other faiths.

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| <p>To have a Catholic community that is formed in its faith (with ongoing Formation from school age through to the elderly) and taking into account its history. We need to follow our rich Traditions while allowing for a modern context, but not progressing too far that we lose sight of the correct doctrines of the Church. We need to acknowledge the rich diversity in culture, particularly the migrant communities that are revitalising older parishes. We need to be more inclusive and connect with females, the youths and the Eastern Rites (e.g. Maronites, Melkites, etc.). We should not bow down to current media driven agendas, particularly with what is 'popular or trendy' to the detriment of our Church teachings. Perhaps one of the most important things is for us to acknowledge our faults, injustices done to others by those in power—particularly child sex abuse. We need to move forward acknowledging our sins but being able to move forward without compromising who we really are as Catholics. We should never forget we are part of one Universal Catholic Church, just one nation in the world seeking to become closer to Christ.</p>  |
| <p>God would perhaps consider that it is important to have more women in positions of authority in the Church. Probably there would be made more sensible and responsible dealings with the child abuses complaints.</p>  |
| <p>*Better communication and sharing of resources/ events:—Across parish borderlines—Within Deaneries—Between Dioceses—Between Church and schools. *Access and use of census data within parish further development. *Allow priests more time for pastoral formation by creating more roles/ opportunities for lay people within the Church i.e. administrative roles within a parish. *Deliberate, intentional, ongoing formation for adults with a local Australian context. *Investment. *Better screening process for teachers of religious education in Catholic schools through:—Reference from parish priest—Evidence of ongoing personal spiritual formation and—professional development in religious education—Fidelity—Accountability. *Creating a space where the older and younger generations can develop relationships and have open, honest, respectful dialogue. *Positive, honest conversations with people from:—Other faith backgrounds—Other Christian faith backgrounds—Differing Catholic communities. *Support Christian media and use this as resource to connect with other Christian faiths. *Stop “reinventing the wheel” for the sake of making it Catholic. *Further awareness/ acceptance of the Church as universal across borderlines in order to enable sharing of resources/ networking.</p> |
| <p>I think God is asking us to remember that it is all about our relationship with Him, and to live our lives according to Gospel values. The role of the Church should be there to support us. Catholics have to learn to trust their own sense of spirituality.</p>   |
| <p>Currently females are allowed to become Senior Servers at the Holy Eucharist. Senior Server is the highest level a female can obtain when serving the Holy Mass. In 2020, could females also get the opportunity to serve as Acolytes in the Holy Mass? Senior/Adult server will perform almost every duty similar to an Acolyte during the Mass. Could you kindly allow all the willing females to become Acolytes in 2020?</p>   |
| <p>Effective Catholic formation is important part of Catholic education. I strongly suggest that daily Mass and daily confession are easily accessible for all students. These become achievable when there is a Church or a chapel, at least, within the school premises allocated with a school chaplain.</p> <p>Catholic education is important for our new generation- children. In our schools, our children will greatly benefit to seek, know and love God if we provide a mentor dedicated to coach each student to develop virtues spiritually that would naturally flow onto successful academic and social aspect of learning. Each mentor is to spend regular quality chats with each student and could be a teacher, a school councillor, etc. who regularly receives extensive Catholic formation from retreats, courses, seminars to empower each mentor with appropriate strategies for each student. Each mentor then is in regular communication with each student’s parents and school teachers to ultimately help each child to progress as desired.</p> <p>We have Church members who rarely attend Sunday Mass. I think it would help to capture their</p>  |

interest and appreciation of the Holy Mass if each parish incorporates visual explanation of each part of the Mass. Another thing to attract Churchgoers is to have the Ten Commandments listed on the front of all the Churches in visibly bold fonts as reminders, not only for each Churchgoer but also to passers-by. I saw it in some churches in my last visit in the Philippines and I find myself being reminded of the Ten Commandments each time I passed the church or when stuck in traffic in front of the church.

Study Jesus' teaching, the gospel. Understand its meaning, and apply in daily lives.

The Catholic Church and all its hierarchy should not separate themselves from the other Christian churches as they have become an elite organisation. Once they are elite they are no longer Christian. They are there to work together for the good of the people. The Church must show courage. They have never stepped out of the comfort zone of authority into the shoes of the unknowing and the people. The Church leaders must do what the people are expected to do—learn and grow through the challenge and discernment and the seeking of truth. This will never come until the Church trusts the people and trusts that even without the Churches leadership, people want a relationship with God. They in their superior elite and isolated bureaucracy have lost their faith and our trust. God is asking us to learn what it means to love one another “as I have loved you”. He was amongst us. He lived with us he worked among us he laughed with us he argued with us, challenged and forgave us, He wanted us to reach our potential, He wanted our health and happiness. These things are asked of everyone not just the faithful but our leaders as well. He is asking us to care for the gifts we have been given. This will always include our health and our earth's natural beauty and environment without which we cannot reach our full human potential. While we are always looking for economic growth, we are ignoring our responsibility to each other. We should be caring for the earth where people have a responsibility to live wholesome lives. Economic growth is an ideal, which only ever serves to advance the wealthy the powerful and the financially ambitious at the peril of the Masses. If we destroy our human bodies and minds and our earth we have desecrated the only gifts God has given us. These gifts of our bodies and our earth should be respected cherished and cared for. We should be setting examples to all. Priests and Christians should be striving for good health for themselves and the environment. We should be treating our physical body truly as “temples” and respect our health and do all we can to maintain health. We should do the same for our environmental health even more so as it has far more wide reaching implications. The Church has a responsibility to our earth and act and lobby governments and law makers in this regard. The priests and spokespeople for the Church should be outspoken in health and environment matters. Even if it is political. This will take courage. We need to avoid economic growth at the expense of our environment and our fellow human well-being. These matters of the environment are urgent as they affect not only our lifetime but that of all future generations. The principles of Christian living, NOT Religion, should be the focus of the Church. I believe God is asking Church leaders to take this on.

God is asking of us in Australia to be representatives of the Catholic Faith to our country and our world. With the sexual abuse scandal many people have stopped seeing the Catholic Church as important both in authority but also trusting the decisions the Church makes. We as lay people are called to stand up and be authentic witnesses of the faith to those around us especially those who don't believe in the faith, to show them that Catholics can be trusted once more and can be a voice of support, love and respect to all. God is also calling us in Australia to be a voice to all the Catholic faith to give them the confidence and strength to stand up for the faith and its values, traditions and beliefs. Young people value real authentic people, even those who they might not agree with, so rather than us trying to pander to young people while losing our traditions, we need to show how important our traditions, and doctrines are, like Eucharist, Confession and let young people who are of the faith see the value in this and those who are not want to know more.

To reach out to the marginalised in a much broader way—divorced, sexual orientation, refugees, youths, lapsed Catholics, homeless, hungry, those suffering from ill mental health, etc. To be more vocal about ways in which to reach out—does anyone else other than church-going Catholics know what we do or can do? To make our faith a truly practical faith—true faith in action, not simply

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| <p>paying lip service by attending Mass. To engage our youths in practical ways that would mirror the actions of Jesus—reaching out to the needy in ways that change the world, one small step at a time. To engage female Religious, in the first instance, to celebrate Mass for the community and to involve more women in official roles. To engage in pivotal, effective discussions about real world issues—climate change. To make our Church more transparent. To actively educate our students about the traditions and history of the Church but also about how people can take the essential message and live their faith without alienating our young people.</p>   |
| <p>To remove the pious hierarchy and return to the teachings of Jesus. God shall send us two by two, male and female to bring the good news.</p>  |
| <p>I believe God is asking us to have faith and to remain close to Him, no matter what happens around us and in our lives. The Church is experiencing many difficulties at this time—we know what they are—all the scandals, misinformation, a bad reputation in the media etc. We know people are leaving the Church, but do we really stop and make the time to ask people why? I believe in this new age, we need to find the courage to engage with the 'other', to truly live out our faith. People are losing their faith in the Church authority, so it's up to the lay people to live out an authentic faith, to practice what we preach. We need to let go of old divisions and work together—a house divided against itself cannot stand. While we need to reach out to the world—we cannot be 'of the world'. We cannot water down our faith to make it more 'acceptable' to the wider society. Jesus spoke some hard truths and he never sugar-coated anything. However, he was compassionate and merciful, and wasn't afraid to speak to anyone. He also didn't despair when he lost followers over these teachings. I don't believe God is asking us to change teachings, but we need to change the way that we engage with people. We need to be honest about our joys and struggles. We need to be honest about sin, and the impact that it has. We need to speak to people in a language that they understand. We need to continually work on ourselves and develop our own relationship with God. The Church has been persecuted many times, and it will happen many more times. So many martyrs died for their faith, and were not ashamed of being Catholic. We need to learn from them and not be afraid to share our faith—our source of life, and hope and love.</p> |
| <p>1. I think God is asking us to build a closer relationship with Him. A closer relationship requires more prayer. Many faithful find prayer in front of the tabernacle or Blessed sacrament helpful making this more available I think would be helpful. Churches—a wonderful example of making this possible is at [ - ], [ - ] and [ - ], [ - ]. Here it is possible to pray in front of the tabernacle with a code or password that allows access to a side room. The Mass is another great encounter with Christ. 2. Making the Mass available to working parent would be helpful. Typically, a suburban Mass is at 9am, coordinating times amongst the suburbs may allow a greater number of working parents to attend morning Mass. 3. Allowing more resources into educating the youths of our faith on a parish level (e.g. retreats, etc.). Also more resources into educating the parents of our faith, and have parenting programs (with babysitting) to help parents at different stages of their child's development. 4. More support needs to be given to parish priests to implement these resources but also in how the parishes are run. Are there ways to empower priests to push back on radical parish councils? Contrary to some comments in the media re: 'clericalism', a parish priest with the strength of his conviction to sack a wayward council is good. Thus maybe priests need more guidance into being strong leaders that have a listening ear but also strong decision making skills as he is the one with a religious training, vocation and hopefully stronger prayer life.</p>   |
| <p>To be Catholic ... I believe that we often forget or ignore Culture, Tradition, and our History as a faith and as children of God ... I believe that we have grown lax and ignorant of our roots that is primarily scripture and tradition. I feel so utterly disheartened when I meet other Catholics, many of whom have claimed to have studied theology, and yet haven't ever studied the 'Old Testament' ... I have met entire classes of Education students looking for roles as Religion teachers in Catholic schools who don't know the 10 commandments ... I believe that we must rediscover the rich History, Culture and Tradition that we have lost in the years post-Vatican II ....</p>   |

1. Unity in the broader Church—Jesus is only coming back for one bride. Ecumenism is not so much about being united in doctrine as it is about being united in the Spirit. Time and time again I meet people from other denominations who inspire me want to be more like Jesus, because it is only by His Spirit that we are united. We worship the same God, so we may as well do it together.

2. Reducing the barriers to entry in the Catholic Church. For non-Catholics, the various liturgies and rituals can be confronting and confusing. They can even be barriers to non-Catholics meeting Jesus in the first place. While I do not think we need to remove/change particular liturgies, I think God is asking the Church to present Jesus in a way that is more accessible to the everyday person. Once they have met Jesus, it then follows that they can continue their journey of discovering Christ through the richness of expression that is found in the Catholic Church. Hillsong is a great example of a Church that presents Jesus in a way that reaches out to the ordinary person. You are welcomed in, you praise God in worship and you are presented with the Gospel. You do not need to know what is going on to participate. While I am not suggesting that we imitate Hillsong, I am suggesting that we can learn from them and others like them.

3. A deeper intimacy with Christ is essential for all Catholics. We cannot give what we do not have. It is not enough for us to know about Christ and talk of Him as someone we read about in a book. Our proclamation of Christ needs to come from a deep encounter of knowing who He is and who we are in Him.

4. In light of the Royal Commission, God is calling us to purify our hearts. I have seen countless courses, programs and departments within the Church dedicated to safeguarding children from those who are meant to mould them. This is a surface level response to difficult events and circumstances. This response is necessary, but it should be secondary to allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us into true repentance and humility, ultimately opening the door for an invitation of the Holy Spirit to transform us. Not once have I seen a course, program or department within the Church that aims to facilitate a deeper purification of our hearts so that they may be conformed to Christ.

5. To know that there is so much more of God if we are willing to pursue Him above all else. The doors of the Church have been closed to the Holy Spirit for too long and it is time for Him to breathe new life into our weary bones.

This is what I believe God is asking us to do in Australia: God wants us to reform our Churches not as the reformation before, under Martin Luther era but as of now as a Church that is authorized by God through Peter, where Jesus is our Lord saviour and king of our life. God want us to assert that authority now in all the Churches according to Matthew 16: 18, (NIV) where Jesus said, "And I tell that you are Peter, and on this rock I will built my Church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." According to His word, it should not pass by as if nothing happened, but it should accomplish His purpose. This purpose it again repeated in Peter's confession of his love to Jesus. Peter has denied our Lord three times and so did our Lord Jesus in turn ask Peter, "Do you love me?" three times. God wants us to bring back that love to all people. Jesus is the people of God. We are His body and we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. How can we neglect such command of God to love our fellowmen and women and all kinds of people. God wants us to serve all people, protect, and provide for them. We have gone too far in the opposite direction and it needs a wind of change and that God wants us to adapt to it. If we don't adapt, we will continue to perish. There are lots of issues that God wants us to resolve, and stamped His authority over them, with His love and the Spirit is waiting for us to do so. God is asking us to do more to the Church to promote peace in our marriage, resolve long list of annulments to release the people from bondage and turmoil and difficulties in life, and they can turn back to God. God wants us to be Holy and perfect. But we must make sense of this Holiness as inspired by the Spirit of God, bringing truth to those who are being left behind, and wandered from our faith to another. God wants us to continue and listen to His words in the scripture for our own good and proper direction. God wants us to leave all the material things that are hindering us from serving Him sincerely. God knows our predicament as the body of His own dear son Jesus Christ, we are being wounded all the time and becoming the victim of our own miscalculations, this brings shame to all those who are being affected one way or the other. God wants us to pray earnestly to all of us so that our spirit will not be weakened in times of temptation. In my experiences God has spoken to me in a vision to gather elders and tell them what He wants them to know. I believe this is

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| <p>a high time for that purpose. I know God is speaking to us all today, and there are lots of concerns He want us to put our attention to it. God is asking all who are called to be His priest to be a real man and nothing changes that. Disobedience brings Satan. He has called them to manifest His love, true love to all. Through their works, God will be glorified. God is asking each and every one of us to be the Church, His body and His love, and He wants us to be the pillar of this love in Jesus.</p>   |
| <p>I believe that God is asking that we proceed cautiously especially during this time. I believe priests should be able to live their lives like everyone. And allow married man to marry.</p>   |
| <p>Catholic priests need to be traditional in their views and preach the true Catholic faith. No lukewarm teaching. Catholics need to stand up for what they believe in and not be passive especially towards social matters which are against the Church's teachings. The Catholic Church must have a more prominent space in our society. Catholic schools need to be proud of their identity and teach the true Catholic faith without fear from offending others. Parishioners must be reminded to wear appropriate clothing for the Mass.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking Australia to return back to his teachings and not abandon them. God would like us to evangelise and teach people the beauty of the Catholic Faith.</p>   |
| <p>My humble opinion is that God is asking us (lays and consecrated) to be faithful to him and the teachings of his Church. We need to be brave when talking about abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage and our young people need to rediscover the virtue of chastity. In my opinion, our Catholic high schools should teach about these topics at school.</p>   |
| <p>To be strong. We need to know what we believe. We need to read our Bibles. Talk to each other about the Bible and our faith.</p>   |
| <p>I think that God wants the Church as an institution to place the safety and wellbeing (physical, mental and spiritual) of people above the traditions of the Church, as some of these traditions have been damaging to people and complicit in covering up the extent of said damage.</p>  |
| <p>Revise the way that most Australian Catholics are not being heard by bishops or priests. Child sexual assault is real but no cleric will stand up to speak to all Catholics, practising or not. The shortage of priests cannot be satisfied by overseas priests with poor English skills. Why can't Australia's clerics expand the Deaconate or allow priests who left the priesthood to become active? Someone needs to stand up to traditional ways that are clearly failing.</p>  |
| <p>To unify our diverse range of groups and proclaim a message that is fully inclusive to all members of the community. I know people who don't feel welcome because of who they are or their lifestyle. Some struggle with a love of the Church which has a doctrine which seems dated and fails to negotiate some of the challenges people of today face. I see many friends and family who are culturally Catholic or baptised and not much else to their formation. For them they see the merits of how Christianity gave the building blocks of Western society but not how it can continue to develop it. I feel like we need to re-establish what is good about the Christian values for humanity today, illustrate our respect and dignity for all and be more active in the Australian community. People aren't coming to Mass like they used to and some of our other Christian brothers and sisters are doing much better at their evangelisation and formation of their followers. Young people need to be appealed to, and for some part, it is working but many don't know how else to be involved in the Catholic Church as a young adult because there aren't many ministries that cater to them. There is a large gap of services between youths and the older adults in many of the parishes I have been to, something needs to be filling that gap outside of the regular Sunday Masses.</p> |
| <p>I believe God is the same God almighty 6000 years ago and now. God has been asking since the foundation of the world to love Him and to love our neighbours as we were all made in His image. So much has been revealed by God to humanity throughout the ages, but just like the Israelites in the old testament we all seem to forget and follow the trends of the world compromising our faith and doctrines for the demands of the world... But I think we all acknowledge deep in our hearts that God's Kingdom is not if this world. So then why are we abandoning the sacred traditions handed to us by our forefathers and saints throughout the ages? I see watered down teachings from the pulpits so much nowadays it somehow became the norm. We seem to be going from far right to a far left.</p>  |

Now I cannot distinguish the Holy Roman Catholic Church to that of other protestant Churches. I see the lukewarmness of priests and fellow brothers and sisters at the Holy Mass. It feels more like a social gathering than worship and it's heartbreaking. So much division within the Church, so many scandals by the very people who were ordained to lead the flock to our God. But there is hope. If every Australian Catholic person including me stays faithful to one's own state in life to offer up sacrifices each day in our daily duties with prayer, God will surely heal the wounds and division in our Church and society. He will sanctify us. I pray that we have good shepherds and leaders especially within the Church hierarchy to remain faithful to Christ from the heart.

I think God is asking us not to just hear the message of God but live it out through our actions. Catholics are not spreading the Gospel. Whilst many may hear it in weekly Mass, it still falls on deaf ears. The baptism can defend their faith better than Catholics. Whilst there need not be judgement, we need to tolerate people as they are but we should not change the core values of the Catholic Church just to accommodate all kinds of people.

To follow the example of his son Jesus in our everyday lives. To be inclusive of those who are different to us and more tolerant of those differences, whether they be as a result of their culture, religious beliefs, skin colour or whatever. We hear the voices of those who want to hold back the clock and live in the past, because that is comfortable and safe. Strident voices denigrating those who don't fit the particular mould of the traditional Catholic. We are the Church, not those in the hierarchy who live in rarefied air, enjoying the privilege of the Church's wealth and making decisions about the lives of millions of their followers, to whom they cannot even begin to relate. Jesus lived in the real world, but it seems to me that his story had been usurped and spun to control and manipulate, particularly the young and vulnerable in some sections of the Church and certain schools, to continue the status quo and continue a specific version of Catholicism that excludes the true role of women and promote the patriarchy of the men who hold these views of superiority. That is very sad and distressing to me. Everyone should be able to bring their gifts and talents to share, for the good of all. I think that is what God would want of us.

Re-evaluate where the Church is heading, by holding firm to the teachings of the Bible and not changing what our core beliefs as Catholics are, to suit "the times".

God is asking the Catholic Church to change. To overhaul outdated practices and become a Church for the people. Families have completely lost faith in the Catholic Church because of the magnitude of child sexual abuse, the cover up, lack of empathy and complete refusal to change practises that so obviously contribute to this Massive issue. To gain the trust and patronage of families you must drop the strict, cold, elitist regime and humanise the Catholic Church. Go back to the Bible and simplify your approach to that asked by God. The disciples were married with families. Why not priests? Paedophiles have either been created by or attracted to the Catholic Church. This fact irrefutable. Stop cowering from the truth and show us you are a Church for the people. Change.

Keep Jesus Christ as the central focus, in our Schools and our society. Understanding and knowing him better through the parishes.

Focus on Jesus Christ and his teachings, especially through the sacraments as this is where he can be a central point to us all.

God is asking us to have a stronger faith. More in additional material that will be attached.

1. Every generation needs to translate anew the narrative their beliefs are based on to make it MEANINGFUL for themselves, without losing the essence. This translation is not happening in the broader Australian culture and the faithful are more and more isolated from the mainstream. The translation needs to be deep and meaningful (not just going to the pub and singing with a guitar rather than an organ) and presented widely. 2. The Church needs to hold on to the essence of not only its truths but also the rituals as faith is not rational, its expression through a ritual and its particularly non-verbal elements e.g. music and singing very important.

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| <p>The Church to become a more inclusive Church, i.e. Laity to be involved in decision making at all levels—both men and women. Women to be accepted as equals in the Church. Ways and means to deal with clericalism. This must be addressed. The third rite of reconciliation to reinstated.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking Australia at this time the same as He is asking us before. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3). This is a high standard that was set by God for the whole Church, the hierarchy and the lay faithful. The Church should not only remind all the faithful that this is the will of God for us but also help in every possible way to attain this. The following are my suggestions: bishops and priests should lead by example. The lay faithful should see that they are struggling themselves to attain holiness. No one can achieve holiness without praying. In liturgical celebration, people should be able to prepare themselves spiritually before the celebration. Homilies should be directed towards helping the lay people in achieving this sanctification. A very important aspect of this sanctification is to be able to bring Christ to others. This is the other side of the coin but will only come if someone is struggling to attain holiness. The Church should help the laity to grow in interior life. Non-Christians and Christians of other denominations are converted to the Catholic Church mostly because of the sacraments especially the Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation. Special attention should be directed towards availability and importance of these sacraments. Many showed heroism in just being able to attend daily Masses. The love of Christ and wanting to receive Him every day distinguishes us from those who do not know Christ. I think this is the ideal why others want to come to the Catholic Church. The Mass, i.e. meeting Jesus Christ, should be the centre of our spiritual life. Unity within the Church. The Church should be seen as One and Holy. A way of communication should be established so that the Church's position on certain moral issues is clearly and timely communicated to the members of the Church. The Church is somehow being seen as timid in speaking the truth. This is not being political but being able to state the Church's position for the benefit of all the Church members. This disunity was quite evident in the last plebiscite regarding Same Sex marriage.</p> |
| <p>That the Church is a place of Welcome where people come to nourish and enrich their Faith. It should be made easier for parishioners to connect with and participate in the many Ministries in the Church. That parishioners have access to and are encouraged to participate in small groups which enable them to connect with others and share faith experiences and receive support. "The Lone sheep is devoured". The Church needs to connect with people where they are.</p>   |
| <p>To be faithful to the teachings and traditions of Catholic Church. To pass on this teachings and traditions to the new generations.</p>   |
| <p>Parish Plenary Submission [ - ], [ - ], NSW- March 2019 The following issues were a priority arising from our November 2018 and February 2019 parish plenary forums. The Catholic Church needs to be: • Authentic • Joyful • Visionary • United • Effectively and positively marketed • Welcoming • Effective • Resilient • Assertive (particularly in the area of social justice) [ - ] at [ - ] commits itself to become more: 1. WELCOMING OF NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS THROUGH TRANSFORMATION OF PARISH CULTURE: We asked, how do we make a home of our parishes in a post-Christian society? • Looking outwards, not inwards to existing cliques; creating a welcoming culture with welcome, home-coming, smiles—if we have joy in our hearts, let your face know; acceptance of all ages and races; inclusive of all those on the margins e.g. divorced, victims of abuse, LGBTQI people- it is not for us to judge each other and this seems to happen quite a lot; allow the option of priests to marry; allow genuine participation of women at all levels of decision-making—at least—and with the possibility of admission to diaconate and priesthood as well; exploring and adopting other models of priesthood. • Genuinely apologise for the mistakes of the past, permit clergy to celebrate marriage outside of the Church building. Concentrate more on the message of Jesus. • Be more appealing and focus on YOUTH and YOUNG ADULTS support families, providing guidance and promoting faith values. • Naming elements of a healthy/unhealthy parish culture; not to judge others; LISTENING; Vision-setting; experimenting with new approaches to doing Church; creating a culture which engages people into a study of the Word so that the Bible is given more prominence in our Catholic culture. 2. LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY: We asked, what is the role of the</p>  |

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| <p>priest? He cannot be at everyone's beck and call. • Allow the option of priests to marry; allow genuine participation of women at all levels of decision-making and to include them as Cardinals at the highest level of decision-making (a Cardinal need not be ordained but appointed by the pope).</p> <p>3. EVANGELISATION INCL. FAITH AND SACRAMENTS, WORSHIP, PREACHING, PRAYER AND PRAISE: Do people feel equipped to invite others confidently into our parish community? How do we move people into a place of enthusiasm for Prayer, Praise and Worship? Why do people feel passive and bored by the experience of Liturgy today? "Masses are too systematic and ritual is too long."</p> <p>4. ECCLESIOLOGY: What model of Church speaks to people in western Sydney today? • Institutions in the Church have become synonymous with abuse; the imperative of adopting a new model of Church, one that is less hierarchical; moving from 'power over' to 'power with'; moving from maintenance to synodal/ mission model of Church. • Moving from maintenance model to disciple-making; moving from 'the building' to the Body of Christ as the New Temple of the ...</p>   |
| <p>* More outspoken leadership from the bishops on refugee and asylum seeker treatment/policies in this country, as well as for all social welfare recipients. * More Christ-like understanding and treatment of divorced and separated people ... including allowing access to communion for divorced people. * New translation of the Mass readings and Gospel to use inclusive language. * Wider role for women in liturgy and parish life. * More administration support for priests to free them from this task in order to allow time for them to minister to their parishioners. * Return to at least deacon level (if not full) ministry for priests who left to be married. * Bishops to act immediately on reports of priests' misbehaviour or abuse of children and vulnerable parishioners by reporting to police. * Bishops to get out and meet their flock on a regular basis. Many do not even come to parishes for confirmation any more, but delegate to priests.</p>  |
| <p>To be transparent and humble. To live the gospel values as modelled for us by Jesus. To be inclusive regarding the laity, especially women's voices to be heard and seen in the decision making of the Church. To look at what changes are needed in Canon Law, for the present day and make these recommendations e.g. the divorced being able to still fully participate at the Eucharist. Would Jesus exclude them?</p>   |
| <p>In the course of my work, I came across these words which sum up for me what God might be asking of us at this time: A humble Church. 'A humble Church would be one without all the trappings of power and prestige and the toxic culture that this can lead to. It would be a Christ-centred, universal community of faith, nourished by Word and sacrament. It would be a mission-focused Church, that is, one that looks outwards, instead of inwards on itself. It would be a Church whose members, as baptised Christians, would seek to share the love of Christ, which they themselves have received. And they would be empowered and encouraged to do this. In doing so, we would seek first the poorest and the most vulnerable and marginalised and we would walk with them, and gather them in to the embrace of a loving God. A humble Church is one firmly grounded in the world around it—aware of the needs and the deepest desires of the people we encounter and prepared to meet those needs through practical and spiritual means.' Much of this humility is present in the Church already, every day, in the faith life of individuals, and people working and ministering in our hospitals, aged care centres, social services, schools, parishes. I think God is asking us to refocus on Jesus Christ and, once again, to "act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God". (Micah 6:8)</p> |
| <p>To engage more in parishes, to have faith and hope in the Church despite the current sexual abuse crisis.</p>  |
| <p>We are asked to "feed God's sheep", with humility and compassion, and to recognise God in all people. We are asked to care for our home because it sustains our health and wellbeing. We are asked to care for our community and pray constantly, because that will sustain our faith. We are asked to nourish the people of God with a new and holy Church that provides leadership in compassion and faith, with humility and courage. We are asked to speak up for the downtrodden and welcome the marginalised, to speak out against injustice and the threats to the dignity of life and of work, and our environment.</p>  |

At this time in Australia. I believe that Micah captured what God asks of us: “only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6, 8 Jerusalem Bible). These should inform the work of the Plenary. They could be couched as follows: 1. Who calls the Church (the people of God in Gaudium et Spes 1,11) to act justly now in Australia? 2. To whom should we show tender love? 3. What does “walking humbly” with God look like, i.e. how do we do it? Reflection on the past of the people of God in Australia is critical. Unless we are honest with ourselves, we will only repeat the errors of the past and the present. The calls of justice and love for people in Australia strike at many confronting issues which Australia as a nation faces. Humbly walking with God requires a trust, listening and reflection on the past and the present. But this can only be a simple beginning even if the answers are confronting. Implementation of responses to the three questions above, give rise to a series of imperatives for the people of God: a. Agree on who in Church should decide and how they should decide what is to be done and by whom. b. Agree on how progress is to be measured? c. And establish a safe place for prophets to alert the people of God if and when we fail to properly respond to the answers to questions 1-3 above.

The Church should focus on the family and everything it means to our Church, our society, our well-being, our salvation. God sent his only begotten son Jesus Christ into a family—this has MEANING. Issues such as abortion, contraception and marriage are very poorly understood by many (if not most) Catholics. The erosion of the family—father, mother and children (and extended family)—has eroded our understanding of ourselves and of our faith. \* A ~50% divorce rate will not bring God's people closer to him but only drag them further away—we need better marriage preparation. Instead Catholics have devalued marriage and many now accept the recent same sex marriage as something that is a matter of fairness. \* A poor understanding of our sexuality and what sex means, has led the laity to be carried away by the tide of the secular world's understanding of sex—gratification, pleasure, objectification and the idea of 'me'. \* The majority of Catholics don't understand the above two points and then therefore don't understand why contraception is not acceptable in the eyes of the Church. On Q&A on the ABC on Monday 4 March, Kristina Keneally posited as a 'Catholic spokesperson' and said that sex is only for pro-creation (!!)—if this is the mainstream understanding of Catholic teaching regarding sex, then no wonder we are at 'logger heads'. We must provide better resources for the laity, better sacramental preparation (especially marriage and baptism, where parents—and parents to be—are central). We must form more and better leaders that can speak eloquently and confidently; apologists that can defend the Church. We need priests to preach the gospel in the homily AND provide opportunities to speak more in depth about real life circumstances and how the gospel ties it together—because unfortunately an 8 minute homily is not enough for these topics. God wants the holiness of the family back—in Australia and the world.

Silence. The world is so loud and society is constantly finding new ways to add more noise into the already loud and overwhelming landscape that we call our home. If we are to truly listen to God, we need more opportunities to be silent. How can we welcome silence into our lives? How can we free ourselves from distractions? How can we return and focus our gaze on our Creator? We need silence. We need places of encounter where we can be silent. We need to learn how to listen to the voice of the Shepherd. How well do we know His voice? How can we develop our listening skills to be more attuned to the voice of God? We also need to listen to the vulnerable, especially the youths. The youths are not only the future, but the NOW of the Church. We cannot move forward without giving the youths opportunities to be heard. We need to hold space for those who are vulnerable, so that they are able to share their stories, their experiences, their truth, their goals and their dreams. It is only after we hold such space and listen, that we can respond.

I believe that confession needs to be more available and promoted. Most parishes only hold confession times on the Saturday for a relatively small amount of time. As a practising Catholic, I try to go once a week but sometimes I have plans on the Saturday when most confessions are available. I suggest parishes have confession available for at least 30 minutes prior to weekday Masses so that parishioners may have the more opportunities to go to confession while also encouraging them to

frequent the Holy Mass. As St JP II said, what the world needs is Divine Mercy. God never tires of forgiving us; rather we get tired of asking for forgiveness. In fact, God wants us to go to confession more than we do ourselves. Priests should devote more time to being available for confession throughout the week. After the Holy Mass, hearing confessions is the priest's duty. Not only confession times, but proper confessional booths with the grill between the penitent and priest. It will protect the priests from false allegations of abuse and makes it more encouraging to go to confession for those who may find it a bit confronting or intimidating confessing face to face with the priest. Another way of promoting confession would be to have First Friday adoration and confession times to encourage the devotion to the Sacred Heart and obtaining of plenary indulgences for our souls or those in Purgatory. Many people do not know about the precept of Confession at least once a year and some forego confession for years on end while still receiving Holy Communion. Promoting confession will decrease such sacrileges and allow the faithful to progress steadily and constantly in their spiritual lives.

1. To encourage, support and use religious organisations of lay people whose objectives are aligned with the Church's objective in spreading the good news. "I am the vine, you are the branches". 2. To strengthen and support religious/scripture teachings in public schools to plant the seed of faith at young age. 3. For the clergy to be better pastors through homilies that teach, lead, guide and encourage to bring the faithful closer to God. In relation to these, priests should be trained as well to be good speakers and communicators.

I think a closer look at the correlation between celibacy and sexual abuse should be closely looked at. Psychological studies, social science studies should be conducted to identify the problems and issues. Suggestions from a lay Catholic:

- Maybe offer an option of Celibacy for some priests and some choose to marry. From my understanding, married priests especially in the early Church were not unheard of.
- Correlation between celibacy and sexual abuse must be looked at.
- Keeping Churches open (maybe 24/7) with security or security codes for parishioners to enter to spend time with Blessed sacrament whenever they want to.
- More focus on social justice issues, practical ways to help the disadvantaged.
- More social science studies identifying problems and areas that may need help from the Australian Church.

- Respect for others, patience.
- Unconditional welcome and understanding.
- Love one another as I have loved you.
- Unconditional love.
- Be respectful of your neighbours; forgive and understand them.
- Be nice to people.

To get out of the Church and evangelise to speak up in your workplace. Circle of friends to support the moral and ethics of the Catholic Church in many social issues. Provide more faith formation for young families. Teach parishioners how to evangelise. Look at other Churches be they Catholic or otherwise, that do it well and learn from them. Give priests training in leadership so they can find a leadership style that suits their parish and their personality.

I think the Holy Spirit is encouraging us towards mission. Evangelisation. We have the truth, the keys for healing and restoration, hope for people. People need to hear the Gospel. We have become afraid of speaking up. We don't know what the Church teaches or understand it enough to articulate it. We need faith formation for young couples with families. Perhaps this can be done through the sacramental programs they attend with their children. Form the whole family. Need to employ young couples of strong faith and ability to relate to others to pastoral work in the parishes.

- Tolerance and acceptance.
- A big shake up.
- To live out our life with Gospel values.
- Shake up—what's in your heart imparted to others.
- Be witness enough for others to want to be part of our faith.
- Learn more about God and reference in our Catholic schools.
- Why do people choose to participate in other things rather than attend Mass?
- Live your faith in all that you do.
- Kickstart the inquisitive.
- Active Christians—not just going to Mass.
- Take our faith to a higher level—live out our faith.
- Outreach to marginalised; more charitable works. Identify their needs and listen to their stories. Build a confidence so that they will listen and provide a system of support.

It's taken me a while to place my thoughts on paper because the question requires all of us to ask deep questions, not only about our Church, but about ourselves. At a time when our Church is struggling to keep its people engaged, struggling to evangelise and failing to really form missionaries, we need to ask ourselves why. I am reminded of Jesus' calling out to those who are broken and out-casted—the blind man, the tax collector, the adulteress. We are all broken—therefore Jesus calls us. The great Bishop Barron says that we must be like beggars showing other beggars which the bread is. In my time as a Catholic, I have experienced more and more a pulling away from this. Instead, we are much more concerned about positions of power, maintain our comfort, ensuring Mass is efficient and less relationships. We serve to please others, instead of focusing on getting to know the One. I firmly believe God is asking us to be more humble, selfless, vulnerable, passionate, committed and wise people of God. We have dumbed down the treasures of our faith for fear of persecution. We no longer speak boldly of God's truth in the public space and even in the comforts of our private lives, we struggle to speak truth even the closest to us. While we speak of loving one another, we settle for convenience for fear of "shaking things up". We are being called to love—to will the good of the other. St Thomas Aquinas provides us with a timeless description of what love is. There is too much looking at our own rights or feelings that have been hurt and not enough desiring goodness for the other. We try too hard to protect our own selves that we don't speak up when we are being called to and as a result, our faith is perceived as unreasonable and yet, reason is needed to help us reach God. I find myself wondering why our schools and universities are not teaching our children/students, our youths, the truth with passion and conviction. Are we too afraid of the system that may not provide us funds? Do we compromise the beauty and capacity for Truth to bear fruit because we are afraid of being accused of excluding teachers from our classrooms? We need examples of the faith, teachers who are willing to be bringing their faith to the way they teach. That their love for Jesus exists and is worth striving for. I believe God is asking us to reclaim the beauty of the truth of our tradition and teaching. To remember that we are His children and that He would never force us into loving—that he would guide us and provide a framework for us to live with so that we can be our own selves and not be bound by the things that enslave us on this earth—power, honour, pleasure wealth. We need to find ways to lead people to God through the mediums of our time like social media. We must stop attacking the Church from within, blaming past leaders, because God's mercy is new every morning—that mean we get a new start each day to live out our faith joyfully. Please see attached.

I personally believe that God is asking us to be more open and welcoming of others within the Catholic faith. In Jesus' time on earth he opened his arms to those on the fringes of society and I believe that this is what we must do within our faith today. We must not discriminate by race, sexuality or culture. We need to open our heart and our minds to the message of a universal love that is accepting of all. In a time where our Church faces many challenges why are we turning people away... Jesus never said anything about exclusivity within the Church, he welcomed sinners and showed them God's love, therefore we should be striving to achieve this too.

God is asking us to listen to the voices of the traumatised People of God—traumatised because we have not listened to the voice of the Spirit in Vatican II,—traumatised because we have not listened humbly to the voice of the Spirit operating in our broader society which has moved ahead in the area of human rights and the role of women and has left us behind, traumatised because we have continued to treat the People of God as children and not listened to them as thinking adults who want to be challenged by the Gospel, not fed a diet of pious thoughts,—traumatised because we have experienced the collapse of the authority of the institution and not replaced it with the authority of the Gospel and the experience of God in personal prayer and interpersonal support in the community of the Body of Christ. God is asking us to be a humble, servant community looking outwards to serve the broader community of which we are part and to whom we are sent to spread the Good News that everyone is created by God, redeemed by the Incarnation of Christ in Jesus, enlivened and healed by the Holy Spirit, and called to celebrate with thanksgiving the revealed truth that we are all one in Christ. God is asking us to incarnate this message of Good News in the

structures of our Church community by eliminating power structures and replacing them with servant structures, by recognising that the People of God are the immune system of the Church and to give them every opportunity to eliminate the disease of clericalism which Pope Francis and the Royal Commission have identified as the underlying cause of the catastrophic abuse of children and of women by ministers with positions of power. A good start would be the broadening of the club of ordained ministers to include married men and women, part-time ministers as well as lifelong ministers. Only a radical reshaping of Church structures will begin the long-term process of reshaping attitudes of superiority by the clergy and of subservience by the laity. Already the use of honorific titles of Lord, Eminence, Beatitude, etc., are gradually disappearing and replacing them with Christian names which emphasize our common baptism and common priesthood. Sadly, it is only when we acknowledge the extent of the disillusionment, trauma, loss of faith by the majority of Catholics and the corresponding ineffectiveness of our witness to the world—only then will we take the radical steps to become the Body of Christ which is motivated and shaped by "the mind that is in Christ Jesus".

- Take the lead on uniting religions.
- To be more united and more pastoral; currently Church leaders are not on same page. Comments from many of our leaders during SSM debate were perceived as contradictory.
- Be more compassionate; pastorally we seem to fail those in need of compassion.
- Move forward, accept the past and move on.
- Outreach to more people.
- Reconciliation.
- Learn from the young and how they accept so readily.

I believe that God would be very disappointed with the Church leaders in this time. Gradually the Church has evolved into a very complacent faithless institution. Traditional teachings are considered "outdated". The majority of Catholics know very little about their faith and would wholeheartedly embrace paganistic and faithless change and would applaud Church leaders for their acceptance of "modern" values. This is totally against what God would want. God wants traditional values and teachings brought back. Who bows their head in reverence at the name of Jesus? Not even the clergy. Allowing the congregation to receive Jesus in their hand is an abomination to God. A complete lack of reverence. How many people walk out of the Church with Jesus in their bag to be used for satanic rituals? Even the Ten Commandments are watered down for children during instruction for the sacraments. We were told not to mention sin so the children don't feel bad about themselves! Where is the sense in that? Very few priests preach about sin, hell or purgatory for fear they will drive people away. Most people think when you die, you go to Heaven. Because that is a comforting thought and they are not being told otherwise. I never hear the priest talking about Graces, sacramentals, offering difficulties to God. I'm very worried the direction the Catholic Church is heading. Jesus instituted the Catholic Church. He gave us the basis of our Faith which has changed for the worse throughout time. The Clergy will be answerable to God for making a mockery of His teachings and leading unknowing people down the path to damnation.

A DECREASE in modernist and protestanising attempts and influences that often pervade the Church in all its aspects. Keep tradition and authentic Catholic culture and beauty in the Church. For example, for Mass, either revert back to traditional Hymns or at least an update from the stagnant postmodernist style hymns left over from the 60s and 70s. The Church needs to be more firm and outspoken on her UNCHANGABLE doctrines and positions on things, especially social issues. For example, clearly NO women priests, NO married priests except for extreme and rare cases, no contraceptives in marriage, same sex marriage is not marriage ETC. BRING our Lady back!! She has suffered huge neglect in the Australian Church since the late sixties. Bring beauty back to the Church! This can be done in many ways, especially regarding the Liturgy of the Mass. For example, training young boy altar servers properly, bringing the use of incense back, training singers and choir members properly. Reverence seems too often to be lacking. Please, our priests and shepherds of the Church, we need to hear you speak out clearly and definitively on the morals, doctrines and the beautiful rich teachings of the Church! As spiritual fathers and heads of the flock, examples of strong leadership and holiness is so greatly needed, especially in this confusing and perilous time in the Church. I speak specifically as a young person, as we young people need clear direction and guidance

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| <p>from the leaders of the Church. The truth and authentic beauty of the Holy Catholic Church is so attractive when taught as it really is, rather than dumbing it down to suit the Masses, in an attempt to draw them in. That way does not work. We want the full and entire truth! Especially as young people. However not just for young people, but for everyone.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverence in Church (esp. Sunday Mass). Respectful dress. Genuflection. Regular confession.</li> <li>• Spread the Good news to people, especially those who do not attend Mass. • Live life the way God intended. • Maintenance and growth of our faith. • Cultural adjustment—respect for each other and everybody. Love one another. • Be tolerant of everyone; be helpful and considerate to everyone.</li> <li>• Pray that the Church recovers from sexual abuse. • Openness to people of other faiths, people who have 'lost their faith', divorcees, etc. • Be more Christ-like; consider our work and attitude at work and in our life generally. • To deal with current issues and maintain our faith. • To be more tolerant and deal with sexual abuse in Church. • Be more welcoming to people of other faiths and backgrounds. • For people to unite for the Saviour of Christ, we need to share the Gospel; act humbly; consider the change in the Church and consider our behaviour. • Show respect and love for others. • We can and should all be welcomers; everyone can be welcoming. • Other Christ-like behaviours we should all demonstrate are mercy and forgiveness. • Practice the rite of reconciliation.</li> </ul> |
| <p>In short, holiness (for details, see attachment).</p>  |
| <p>God is calling for the people of Australia to be more aware of spirituality as the centre of their lives. To achieve this they need guidance from the clergy who seem to be too busy, too tired, too preoccupied with administration and non-spiritual counselling. Homilies must be for teaching and inspiration. Young people need opportunities e.g. in school classes to get to know the local priest in order to consider joining them in the priesthood. Priests learning about business management in a step in the right direction but only in a supervisory capacity. Dioceses need a totally new system of management including paid staff to carry out the day to day running of parishes.</p>  |
| <p>The Church has to listen to the younger generation, so that they can participate in the decision making process and make their voices heard. The Church has to be frank in dealing with any issues and speak the truth of what is happening today. The Catholic Church has to learn from other better organized Christian denominations like Hillsong to preach inspiring homilies and introduce uplifting Praise and Worship to captivate the youths.</p>   |
| <p>I believe that God is calling the Church back to the traditional values of the family unit as the systematic breakdown of these values are the target of secularism and could contribute to the downfall of the Church. As such, the Church should announce a clear, firm and universal stance of the major issues of abortion and gay marriage. Regardless of whether they are made legal, the people of the Church need to understand the moral gravity of these sins.</p>   |
| <p>I think inter-church and interfaith relations are very important. I think this aspect of Catholic life in Australia is neglected. The crucial area is what is happening in the local parish.</p>   |
| <p>Celebrate families and family in its largest possible sense.</p>   |
| <p>Adult education.</p>   |
| <p>To address the decline in Mass attendance.</p>   |
| <p>I think the problems we are experiencing stem from a deviation from the traditional values held by the Church. The Faith is being watered down continually, in an effort to attract young people, it seems. However, having vast experience with young people (I am a mother of 8 and a school teacher of 20 years' experience) I hear many young people complain that the Church is not giving them direction; that it is not clear on issues and that priests are not always giving them consistent answers to their questions. Issues like abortion and gay marriage are skirted over and even contraception is a grey area, with many Catholics believing that most things are "up to our conscience". I think God is asking us to give people clear and consistent guidelines, to safeguard us against the sadness we experience by not following the tried and true principles Catholics were getting in the past.</p>   |

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| <p>Encourage the growth of religious organisations which set out to make their members holy. We do this by promoting organisations such as the Legion of Mary, Mary's Little Children, Couples for Christ, etc. Support or organise more public religious processions as deemed necessary by these organisations. Regular parish visitations by the bishop or his appointee more frequently than they are carried out at present to ensure that parishes implement Church teaching and best Diocesan practices.</p>  |
| <p>To recover the dignity of marriage, as an institution and as a sacrament, we need to invest in good courses for engaged and newly married couples. Marriage preparation courses should include “back to basics” explanations on the marital union at the spiritual, emotional and physical levels. Older couples should also have good input in MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT to encourage them to remain faithful to each other, and to support them through the challenges of marriage and family life.<br/>Submission to Plenary Council from [ - ]</p>  |
| <p>NUMBER 1 = priests need to be more captivating in homilies. They need to be shorter and straight to the point. Teach them Public speaking skills. We need more Deacons like Harold Burke Sivers. Registry for spiritual directors would be amazing. Formation for teens/young adults. Give priests guidelines and standardise confession advice in line with teaching. Religious education teachers to be formed in the true Catholic faith. Pre and post marriage formation. Have mentor couples for newly married couples in crisis. Bring back Catholic cultures and traditions such as processions, home visits, holy water and incensing for new homes. Educate children at high school about the importance of communication in marriage and parenting. Parents’ formation at Catholic schools.</p> |
| <p>To encourage more participation by younger people in the Church. For young people to grow in the faith, they need a sound beginning in the faith. Therefore teachers in Catholic schools must be committed Catholics themselves. You can't pass on the faith if you don't have the faith yourself. I have attended many parishes throughout Australia and I have noticed that there are almost no or very few young people and families. This is not the case where I live, but in other places there is a distinct lack of young people.</p>   |
| <p>I think that God wants our Church in Australia to be strong in the faith, to be faithful to his teachings (not politically correct and worry too much what other people will say) and to love Him as a child loves his Father.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking us to recognize the effects of the terrible abuse which has been committed in the name of the Church and to take instant and generous action to show the people of the Catholic Church that they are indeed serious about this matter.</p>  |
| <p>I think God is asking us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Better support our priests.</li> <li>—Promote the importance of celibacy for priests.</li> <li>—Better inform communities of the importance of the family as the cornerstone of society.</li> <li>—Maintain our values regarding "traditional" marriage.</li> <li>—Safeguard the seal of the confessional.</li> <li>—More focus on the continual formation of adults, especially in regards to marriage.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>I think that it is wonderful that we have access to the sacraments. However, I believe that there could be better coordination between parishes in relation to providing access to Mass. It is typical in my experience that Mass is often provided at times which are not suitable for professional people. The typical time is 9am. There is no early Mass or evening Mass provided. Often over Christmas, Mass is scaled right back for up to a month, even at the Cathedral, where most professionals are back to work well before this. If parishes within geographical areas could band together providing morning (6am) and evening Masses (7pm), I think this would be fantastic for daily Mass goers and would also not be too onerous on the priests.</p>                                       |
| <p>It is wonderful to see so many young families in our parish. The Domestic Church is a crucial element of the Church and has been overlooked in the past. I think it would be fantastic if we could provide professional talks to married couples about raising children at the different stages of their</p>  |

development and to strengthen their marriage. This would help parents and married couples to better fulfil their vocation. Also the World Meeting of Families is an amazing experience which many families would benefit from. Could we have a savings scheme over a three or six year period to help families attend?

I have been impressed by the example of some wonderful priests who have worked selflessly. We need better understanding of this gift to the Church. I think it is very important that priests remain celibate. Firstly because they are in the image of Christ. Christ could have been married but choose not to due to the importance of his mission to spread the Gospel and to give himself completely to those who had come to know and love God and those who had yet to know him. This is still true for priests today. Because the demands on priests are so great, they would not be able to fulfil the married vocation properly. Having been married for 15 years, this is my considered position.

To come together as a Church community and stand together in our faith. To be advocates of His word, and to continue to share the good news with other. To remember where we started, to raise our children to know and love God as we were taught.

Many adults have stopped learning about the Faith after high school. We need more adult formation in the parish. There are many Catholics who have limited formation and are searching for more. There are resources like Parousia Media, which could be helpful. It would be good to tap into them and other good material so that adults' faith can be nurtured and grow. For the Plenary Council (Submission) [ - ]

To evangelise and be Christian witnesses to our fellow Australians. I believe God wants us to bring the hope of the Good News in a time when Australia is becoming secularised and lacking in hope. I think God wants individuals to turn to Him with their whole lives to prioritise getting to know God and the entirety of the Catholic Faith. I also think parishes need to come to life more and be more engaged with their attendees. Often people show up to Mass and go home without greeting anyone. I think this is a tragedy. We should be reaching out to each other as part of the Christian family. We should be growing in love for the stranger, widow and orphan. We should be contributing socially and with our time to the growth of the parish and the spiritual enhancement of the parishioners.

It must be clear that the hierarchy of clericals MUST be overhauled. There are many lay people and lay religious who are as well, or better, trained than clerics. Plus they have a much wider knowledge of the people who are to be served—the people of God; who are only called on or referred to when something is wanted. There are statements about 'listening' yet there are reports the hierarchy is saying that no notice will be taken of the laity in this exercise. This would be fatal. The Church will diminish to the point of extinction if the People of God are not more intensely involved at the highest level. We need leaders who are not only theologically trained but who also have the lived experience of the wider world. It is imperative that deep consideration be given to the ordination of married men; to women priests; and to priests being able to marry. Also the plight of those entrapped in a relationship that has soured and may lead to untold misery. Times have changed and the question of annulling such marriages has arrived. The knowledge of the difficulties may be a part of the reason more and more couples choose not to have a nuptial Mass, or any religious ceremony. The current Church has lost the majority of the last few generations. The loss of faith needs to be addressed and will require a huge, ongoing effort to attempt a recovery.

- Authentic/strong/unambiguous voice supporting traditional Catholic family values and bioethical teaching (i.e. unequivocal stance on contraception, divorce and remarriage, cohabitation).
- Teach our youths robust catechesis.
- Conservative Liturgy (instead of trying to make it a concert and take away from the sanctity of the sacrifice).
- Priests demonstrating a strong love of Christ by practising what they preach and being loyal to the teachings of the Church.
- Sacred Music instead of Hillsong.

—Priests to have courage to speak the truth to the laity and the laity to have courage to live the faith.  
 —Stronger emphasis on frequenting the sacraments (especially the Eucharist and Confession).  
 —Emphasis on prayer.

We are asked to be more passionate in our faith and actively participate in the community of Christ. We are asked to increase youth involvement by using two-way approaches rather than dictating to them. We are asked to strengthen the formation of young children into the faith through family engagement, a stronger link between schools and parishes, and the liturgy of the Mass. We are asked to develop strong leadership in both the clergy and the laity and address issues related to gender, inter-faith, accountability of actions, with transparency, openness and integrity.

I think God is asking Australia to return to its core values and strengthen the faith of young Catholics especial at Catholic schools so that the children taught will have a deep understanding of their faith and attend Mass weekly. We also must cut ourselves off from the government and media because they are not supporting us, if anything, they are against us.

We are called to true transformation, as individuals and as a Church. We are to move from the 'False Self' to the 'True Self', to become the people God desires us to be, one with Him and one with each other and creation around us. Our Church must move towards teaching its people how to achieve transformation, and the art of contemplation, as was the true heart of the early Church, if anything is going to change in our families, our Church and in Australia. We (my wife and I) really don't know why, such extraordinary and beautiful teachings and reflections from such people as Fr Richard Rohr, Fr Ron Rolheiser, Fr Thomas Keating, Sr Joan Chittister, and many others, are not promoted and taught much more widely. It was only by self-searching that we have discovered such people who bring God alive and so close to us in our life ... How wonderful it would have been for the Catholic Church in Australia to make such beautiful material through such gifted people available to so many more and to truly transform hearts and lives in this country!!

The Catholic Church in Australia needs to:

- Be more outspoken in protecting freedom of religion (e.g. freedom to teach the faith in Catholic schools), freedom of conscience (e.g. doctors' right of refusal to recommend abortion) and freedom of speech (e.g. on controversial issues such as abortion, same sex marriage, transgender issues).
- Improve the teaching of the Catholic faith in diocesan schools. It is often watered down by teachers who themselves lack formation.
- Emphasise the need for ongoing formation (intellectual and spiritual). After big events such as WYD or ACYF, young Catholics often wane in their faith due to lack of ongoing formation provided to them. There should be regular formation events at the parish and diocesan level to engage the youths intellectually with great depth. High energy youths events such as praise and worship, and games are often short-term solutions, but need to be backed up by strong doctrinal teaching to sustain the youths' faith in the long term.
- Go back to basics with Catholicism. Instead of focusing on "innovating" our sacraments and Church, there needs to be a renewed understanding of the Catholic faith, history, tradition and identity. The Church has such rich history and theology that needs to be properly examined and communicated before we can discuss "innovation".
- Improve our understanding of the hierarchy of the Church, the proper role of the priesthood, role of men and women in the Church, and the overall body of Christ. The movement pushing for allowing priests to marry and for women to be ordained as priests is often misguided and based on erroneous assumptions that the Church is repressing those concerned. Rather, this question should be answered in light of the Church's longstanding teachings and traditions.
- Better communicate and present our faith to society.
- Better form ourselves and leaders within faith communities. Often, youths leaders or lay Church leaders are put in positions where they are teaching others about the faith but are severely mal-formed themselves. This can lead to confusion and lack of clarity on Church doctrine, and bring about the potential for heresy to spread.
- Encourage priests to use their homilies and other speaking opportunities to talk about the Church's stance on controversial moral issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage.
- Be better equipped to address mental health

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| <p>issues, especially with a Catholic perspective. This could also be in collaboration with the Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office in the Diocesan Chancery Office.</p>   |
| <p>Hello there, I really believe that at the moment the Catholic Church is becoming more 'Protestant' in our liturgy, specifically in our music during Mass. For example, my local cathedral is [ - ], and when I am there it is often very hard to know whether I am participating in the Holy sacrifice at Calvary or in a rock concert. There are loud drums and electric guitars all throughout the Mass and it is almost impossible to engage in contemplative prayer with all the 'entertainment.' It is not just at [ - ] but I believe an issue in the current Church as a whole. Having been at WYD in Poland, it was also creeping into many of the Masses there as a way of 'appealing to the youths.' I am 24 years old, and I have been struggling with this for a couple of years alongside many other young, devoted Catholics. I firmly believe that by trying to adapt to the form of entertainment in our modern times we are really showing our weakness. We have a lot more to offer in our faith than flashy music. Rather than creating a culture where parishioners clap after Mass, we should be moved to stay behind in silence and do thanksgiving for the wonderful mysteries we just had revealed to us. It is not my aim to be a crusty cynic who just complains about the attempt to bring people in. I am all for music and praise and worship being loud and proud, but I really think that within the boundaries of the Mass it should be appropriate to the setting. If you are unable to close your eyes and pray when you get back to your seat after communion because there is an electric guitar solo going on (which has happened), then I think the music is counter-productive. My recommendation, coming from an open-minded and practicing Catholic man, is that we should attempt to go back to the roots of our faith in the liturgy rather than try and fight an impossible battle by trying to be the most entertaining Church. We can do this by going back to more peaceful, theological hymns, to have music that raises the heart and mind to Heaven and the mysteries of the faith. Not every young person wants to be entertained at Mass. We get marketed to every second of our days, we yearn for something deeper when we come to Church. Capture the minds and hearts of the youths through the unique graces and truths that only the Catholic Church has, talk about topics that challenge us and raise questions, every Church can entertain, but this is the kind of content that will challenge young people today and show us what is truly available in the Catholic Church today. Resolutions—stop attempting to entertain youths with music (during Mass)—instead capture them with content and deep unique truths of the faith—if parishioners clap at the end of Mass they have missed the point, the music is not there to entertain, it's there to promote prayer and love of God—if the music does not allow for contemplation during Mass, it is too overpowering—youths need to know there is more to Church than entertainment.</p> |
| <p>At my school there is a thing called Adoration. It is when Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist is present in the Monstrance. It is then placed on the altar for everyone to see. This is really good because Jesus is right in front of you and that really helps to focus on Prayer. Because some people lose concentration more easily or may even forget that Jesus is in the tabernacle. There is also a chance to go to confession. This gives a lot of people a chance to better know Jesus as a friend. I think this should be given as an option more frequently as it is really useful.</p>  |
| <p>To be faithful to the Gospel and to the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church, despite secular persecution and or political pressures.</p>  |
| <p>I have spent the last 12 months praying and reflecting on this question. My husband and I have spoken about it many times and prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to guide us and we have the following: Tabernacle: In all of our Churches, the tabernacle be returned to the wall behind the altar. We have walked in churches and can't find the Blessed sacrament, we have to look around to find where to genuflect to show our reverence and adoration. I have prayed in a church where He is practically tucked behind a wall to the side. I felt like He was being kept away from me. He needs to take centre stage and the only place is behind the altar. Theology of the body—Children in Catholic schools are being taught about sexual reproduction from age 10. It is irresponsible of Catholic schools and the Church to not be presenting this information with continual and in-depth understanding of why God gave them us this gift of reproduction. There are many programs to do</p>   |

this age appropriately from kindergarten. We have anti bullying programs that use up teaching time, and for many children these behaviours have a lot to do with their cognitive development but any child can begin to understand why God made them and who they are. Doing this would help to reduce mental health problems in later years as children will grow up with a stronger sense of self and a culture saying Yes to chastity. Strong and unambiguous teaching from priests, bishops and Pope. We need our shepherd to lead us to safety. Not give us parts of information then leave it with us to figure it out. The media is so strong and our personal experiences are many. It is easy these days to have our judgement clouded. Family catechesis in Catholic Schools: Many people don't go to Mass because they just don't make time. If they truly understood the Mass, they would make time. Parents see value in having their children receive sacraments but then can't fulfil their obligation to teach their children our faith including attending weekly Mass. This is a world of 'entertain me'! The Catholic Church doesn't need to join that. Our Lord is enough as He, people need to take the time to understand and give one hour a week to Him. An end to the argument over the vow of celibacy for priests. This does no one any favours. The idea that priests not having sexual relations factors into child abuse is absurd and nonsensical. We need to support our priests; they are giving everything to the Lord in service, this is not an argument to have to reduce child sex abuse and it is demeaning to priests who make this vow. It implies that they may end up a child sex offender because they are celibate. I feel God is saying to us in Australia, be strong, stand together and uphold the tradition of the Church. Don't bow to society. Always love but we don't need to change in fear of hurting feelings. What is love if we don't tell people the truth? Thank you for considering our points in our submission.

To be a Practicing Catholic in Australia it is very difficult to access the sacrament of confession. This shouldn't be the case but unfortunately it is. The sacrament of confession is rarely available at our parishes and when it is, it is not publicized and it is available at inconvenient hours of the day. As a Catholic, confession is important because it allows us to gain grace and get back on the right path of our spiritual and personal journey with God. Therefore, I think we need confessions available before and after all Masses at times that are convenient for people's busy lives. At our parish, Mass is every Saturday at 4.45. This is a perfect example of what I am talking about because, if we have it once a week at a random time, it makes it difficult to be submerged in prayer and is then harder to make a good confession. It is also hard for people to come to confession at this time because people's lives are very busy. If we had confession after Mass, we will not only be able to make a good confession but it is easier to access, encouraging us to go more often. Overall, I think that having confession available after Mass will allow more people access to confession.

I think that He would be wanting to be more orthodox and stand up for what is right on major social and bioethical issues including gay marriage, abortion, euthanasia and divorce (the bishops' response to these have been very poor and pandering to progressive anti-Catholic organisations). Also have an emphasis on the importance of the holy family and how to reflect it in our own. I also think that God would be ...

\*Invite children into the Church and keep them—they will bring parents. \*Women to play a more active role. \*Forgive the sins of the past and fix the reason these have occurred.. \*The Church needs to connect more with the community. \*Changing the values of Australia while maintaining the values of the Church—regard to refugees. \*Accepting others without judgement and consequences like Jesus did. \*Reaching out to younger audiences and making connections—music, more flexible, interactive. \*Parish Councils to have representatives from the whole community and not just the same people year after year. \*The Church to be open and inclusive of everyone regardless of belief, religion and love them as Jesus loved- especially those rejected by society. \*Peacemakers in a troubled world. \*Forgiveness and reconciliation. \*More youths involvement in everything. \*More laity involved in conversations—in the running of the Church. \*More community centred involvement. \*Gain trust. \*Recognise the world as we know it in 2019. \*Allow Catholic role models to be their authentic selves e.g. teaching. \*We fear being judged by others but not a loving God. \*Living the values of respect, kindness, generosity and inclusiveness. \*Leading by example.

\*Compassion towards all people—particularly the marginalised—gay. \*Priests be allowed to marry and experience a family life.

To speak openly about our faith in both smaller and wider communities, whilst being humble and Christ like as we spread the good word and truth about Christianity. Also to be active in doing so, today's troubles and bad influences in society, are pulling people away from God, they need to be reminded and hear the words of our Lord, in a very humble manner.

We believe God is asking that:

—We need to increase the involvement of Catholics in the Church after baptism. Many people get baptised, receive confirmation and first holy communion, but they don't get involved in the Church after that. Parishes should try to reach believers when they are in their teenage years, or at University, by offering more prayer groups or talks relevant to their needs, etc.

—We believe the Church, specifically parish priests, need to promote and make more available the sacrament of Confession. It seems that many priests have time only to celebrate Mass and they don't encourage parishioners to go to Confession regularly, because it may be too much work to do. The practice of regular Confession should be encouraged as a source of joy, peace and grace.

—Priest also should promote more the practice of personal mental prayer. This is something that is not heard often in the Sunday homilies. It is helpful and edifying to see priests that are prayerful and spend a lot of time in front of the Blessed sacrament.

—We need to change the idea that the Catholic Church hates gay people. We have to explain to them that impure acts are sinful, just like for every Catholic, but homosexual inclinations are not sinful in themselves. We love the person, but hate the sin.

—We have to challenge the general idea that the Australian society has, that priests are paedophiles. Rebuilding trust in the priesthood can be done by promoting and showing to society what many good priests are doing, and being more transparent in the admission process in the seminaries. Also, we believe the Church needs to give greater support to the priests who are lonely in the country side by creating a support network for priests.

I believe God is asking us to stand for our faith by training ourselves to be able to evangelise others and to be courageous in showing the Love that God has to give to all of us. In the current climate of negative attitudes towards the Church, we need to defend our beliefs despite of the bad press because God is faithful to those that are faithful to Him. God is palpable in everything and people don't appreciate this because they are distracted with the world. People need formation and to be encouraged to stand for the truth. If more people are formed in the Catholic faith, the family and society would be protected with values that have been proclaimed for thousands of years. Ignorance in the faith makes people indifferent to the needs of others and the future of the Church.

He's asking us to be unashamedly yet humbly Catholic. Scripture says be in the world not of the world. We should conform ourselves to God whose image and likeness we are made in and not seek to transform God into our image. You can change all the teachings in the world (women priests, abortion, contraception, gay marriage...) but the Church would cease to be Catholic and would the Masses really flock back anyway? Many have said they wouldn't and those not Catholic who hate Church teachings have said they wouldn't either. Vatican II (in her actual documents, not the false made-up lowercase spirit) said that Church teachings come from God, not man, so what right do we have to change them, or dilute them or just never speak about them (like the evil of birth control). The Church would become just like the world except she just so happens to do some nice charity things, but even atheists do charitable works, so then why bother being Catholic? How is the Church than any different to the rest of the world in people's eyes? Reverent Masses (ad) oriented to God not man. Priests should know their rite—so the old Latin and Vernacular Mass side by side in each parish (right to choose, pluralism, inclusive). Proper sacred music (Gregorian Chant makes the pop charts, 'Gather Us In' type songs don't). May crownings, Corpus Christi Processions, etc.—and not just for the cathedrals. Make a big deal of Saints feast (as in feasting and festival) days including restoring St. Joseph to a holy day of obligation as per Canon Law. The reason (according to research) most Catholics don't go to Mass comes down to a lack of proper catechesis. So many who identify as

Catholic or ex Catholic, hate Church teachings yet are illiterate as to what the teachings actually are that they hate. The Catechism (CCC) says at Mass we are at the foot of the Cross of Calvary with the Blessed Mother. How many people really get this? Saints have talked about the Angels flooding the sanctuary too. Not just pious words but doctrinally accurate. We need better and proper catechesis for kids, parents, grandparents (good grief) and singles. Not just Jesus loves you and be a nice person. Not just he was born in Bethlehem, some Bible stories, died on the Cross and rose again (as wonderful and important as these are); but the nature of the Church (e.g. divinely ordained and hierarchical), the four last things, sex (Church teachings, which no one understands, would fix a lot of societies woes including fatherless children). Some kids go to a Catholic primary school but whether cost or travel time to go to a state high school, so while on their level, we need to start young. Kids are smarter than we realise and they can smell a fake a mile away, so we need to be authentically Catholic and not dumb things down. They long for belonging, especially with family breakdowns. Instead of belonging to the world, gangs, drugs, atheism, not so free love (sex) and what have you, how about the Church—God’s family?

I believe God is asking us to get back to basics and once again live our Christian faith beyond just our personal relationships with out. We need to reach out to lapsed Catholics and once again the Catholic model of believing, praying and worships in fellowship rather than adopt the individualistic mentality that is currently evident in our society. We are not Protestants, we are not moral relativists. We are Catholics. We better serve our communities by forming and participating in our parishes not just on a Sunday but build friendships and communities for every day. The Catholic faith is rich and true and we must strive to get our message of hope to the people around us. People need to feel they belong in the Church. We also need more 24-hour perpetual adoration chapels made available.

In our view, God is asking us at this time in AU several things. However within our family we feel this as one of the most important; to know and love Christ by undertaking acts of kindness, charity with humility. Having these traits will foster tolerance and freedom of speech—bringing back Catechism within the classroom; having the teaching faculty with thorough knowledge of the Faith and the like. Our family on several occasions, having ventured to the city with backpacks giving these to the homeless and being witness to this gift giving. We have also participated in feeding the homeless with [ - ] Co-Cathedral in [ - ] with the Heaven on Earth committee and we believe that God is asking us to do more of this charitable work in Australia. We have done this with our children with the view that they can appreciate the time, treasures and talents that we have been given by Our Father, God. It is within our little domestic Church that we try and foster these behaviours and attitudes. We also believe that God is asking us to witness Jesus in our everyday life so that we become people of the world and not worldly people, creating a sense of “us” rather than “I or me”.

I think God is asking us to stand by his Church. It is so easy to distance ourselves and be silent on issues that are hard, but God is calling us to be witnesses of the truth. There is always a place for God's love but we cannot accept the dilution of Church teachings and tradition to make it easier for 'modern' Catholics. Being Catholic is never supposed to be easy, it is sanctifying us and God does bless us but we will be persecuted for what we believe. There needs to be a return to a reverence for Christ's bride the Church, for his religious who serve the Church devoutly and help to sustain it. I believe that we have the opportunity to be humble and admit that we do not accept or condone abuse in the Church but at the same time this is not a witch-hunt. Ultimately, we need to be united and firm in our Church teachings so we can get through the hardship.

I think that God would want us to keep him at the centre of our lives and everything we do. Amongst the issues that we are facing such as same sex marriage and abortion, God would want us to stand up for our beliefs in the same way Jesus did, with love and with conviction. Many of us Catholics tend to not voice our beliefs in fear of rejection and persecution, but if we all stood together, the burden would be less difficult to carry. When the public and the media see the division that we have when it comes to our values, they use this to further break down what we have built. God is asking us to uphold the values that Jesus taught us himself and not be afraid of believing them.

To grow to a maturity of faith which is unafraid to dispense with vestiges of the past that no longer serves us well. One of these is liturgical vestments which is a potent symbol of clericalism and glorification of religious practice over simple devotion to Jesus present in the Eucharist. We need to return to first principles: love of God, love of others, humility and the cultivation of an interior faith, not a focus on outward displays of piety. In breaking bread, let us be more faithful to the humble circumstances in which Christ himself instituted the Eucharist. Or are they not good enough for us? A more inclusive culture where the talents of qualified women and married men can be properly used in all areas of Church life. Homilies should not be only open to priests many of whom are not great homilists and may have ESL issues. Why can't capable members of the congregation take this on? More accountability for decisions of parish priests: perhaps an ombudsman type of role is necessary.

On Establishing a Personal Relationship with Christ— 1. When Our Lord began his public life, He called the Twelve and many others to follow him. Some listened to his Word out of curiosity but soon after just walk away. Others were captivated by his preaching and stayed longer but even among them there were a number who gave up at some point. Only those who understood that Jesus is more than a teacher or a preacher remained: those who saw Him as a friend (cf. Jn 15:15). 2. Still today, especially among young people, many come perhaps attracted by a welcoming atmosphere or the chance of experiencing something new. They come with their friends but quite often... they also leave when their friends leave. The obvious conclusion we can draw from this pattern is that in their parish or group they may encounter friends, but they missed “the Friend”. 3. Jesus founded a Church, a community, a family. Like in every community, the feeling of belonging is important. In a parish, religious community, youth group, etc., the human factor is absolutely necessary. We share not only the faith, but also good moments, traditions, memories, etc. Nevertheless, this human factor is not enough for the link to become commitment. At times, we see the connection lost even for banal reasons like boredom, disagreement on something unsubstantial or the transition from one age group to another. 4. The transformation of the human sense of belonging into something really spiritual and permanent can only happen in a spirit of personal prayer (that includes also the Liturgy). 5. On the other hand, not everyone fits into pre-established groups. It is important that pastors consider the uniqueness of every member of the Church. Some of them will not find their place in the so called “active roles”—like the different ministries that the laity are welcome to participate in—due to their character, temperament, lack of time, temperament, etc. Some young people feel uneasy because they don't enjoy the activities organised by the parish group, or the music they play, or some kind of interaction that they consider “weird”. But they should never feel excluded from the Church for that reason. They need a personalised attention. More importantly, if their connection is direct with Christ—not mediated by the group—their perseverance in the faith is guaranteed.

A revival of the sacrament of Reconciliation. 1. After several decades in which the sacrament of Reconciliation went through a crisis—with few Catholics availing themselves of this means of purification and penance—there is at present, thanks be to God, an increasing number of faithful who request to be heard in Confession. 2. It is of our understanding that the mentioned crisis was due to different factors, among them the lack of available priests to administer this sacrament, the loss of trust of the faithful in their local pastors, the lack of an appropriate setting—i.e. proper confessionals where the penitent could feel his privacy or even his anonymity respected—the fear that their trust in the confessor might be abused, etc. We can perceive that, wherever a confessional is available, more penitents feel comfortable enough to have recourse to the sacrament of Reconciliation. 3. Most priests might feel more reassured if the place where they meet the penitent—especially in the case of women and children—offers complete guarantee of avoiding even the remotest temptation of giving into perhaps sincere but inappropriate manifestations of affection and sympathy: that is something which is very likely to happen when the penitent needs, not only forgiveness, but also human consolation and comfort. That reassuring place is ordinarily a confessional where both priest and penitent benefit from complete physical and even visual

separation. The traditional booth provided with a grate that avoids any kind of contact should not be despised as something of the past, considering the current circumstances. We should humbly accept that it was a grave error to undervalue the risks of changing that practice, common until a few decades ago. Experience shows that it would be wise to return to the use of the confessional with a grate. Besides, this is a right of the faithful contemplated in the Code of Canon Law, no. 964 §2, 3. Unfortunately, in some parishes the confessional booth exists, but it is not used. 4. In most parishes, the time dedicated to confessions is scarcely 30 minutes or 1 hour once a week. Some of the penitents might not be able to make it at the established time, or they may find a large number of people waiting. There are occasions when the penitent would need more than a couple of minutes especially if he needs counsel or encouragement. The priest should keep in mind that he can delegate many of his tasks on other members of the parish, but only he can administer the sacraments: that is his most important role and the one no proxy can perform. 6. Considering all this, we propose that the bishops of the Dioceses of Australia ensure that: a) Every parish has an appropriate confessional booth, operational, and encourage its use. b) All pastors—especially parish priests—dedicate ample time to hearing confessions and providing spiritual direction.

Instead of always concentrating on our sins, remember to lift our hearts and mind to God in Adoration and Thanks, Repentance and Petition, and to be always be open to God’s spirit encouraging us always to help our neighbour.

God is asking us all to live a life of love for all others

Healthy families = healthy society

I don't know what God "thinks". But I do know what He "wants", and the reason for this certainty is because Jesus Christ founded a visible Church on earth by giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom and making him Pope. Thus we have a Magisterium teaching us God's Word and we can say with confidence that God wants all men to be saved and for Australian Catholics to come back to the faith. Australian Catholics are terribly lukewarm about their faith and need to be kick-started into action. Not in a superficial, weak-kneed way, but in a real "pick up your cross and carry it" way. I also take umbrage that the Plenary Council President extended this question to people from all different faiths and even outside the Church. The Catholic Church is the One, True Faith. While we must treat all human beings with dignity, there is no sense to give voice to outside parties telling us how to run our Church, or from ex-Catholics who left the faith because they were not able to abide by the rules in the first place. In the end the Church is not a democracy but a teaching Authority founded by Christ Himself. Enough with falling in lockstep with the world and more of falling in step with CHRIST. Words like "diversity", "inclusion" and "tolerance" are code speak for pushing an agenda that is contrary to the Catholic faith i.e. diversity in allowing women priests (NEVER gonna happen) "inclusion" by allowing everyone at Mass to receive Holy Communion, regardless of whether or not they are in a state of grace, "tolerance" by allowing active homosexuals to participate in the liturgy 'without judgement'. The faithful laity are TIRED of this. It's easy to know what God wants. He wants us to proclaim the Gospel, repent and take up our crosses daily. In this world it means being COUNTER-CULTURAL. The Church doesn't move WITH the world, the Church usually moves AGAINST the world. There are a number of key battles Catholics MUST take up—the fight against the Culture of Death. 45% of Catholics believe abortion is acceptable. A majority of Catholics believe gay marriage is okay. How did we get to this stage that Catholics believe this? God wants the murder of his babies to STOP. God wants the immorality of co-habitation and unnatural sexual behaviours to CEASE. That is what God wants, and it's something that doesn't need a "listening" session to know. We know it from the Bible and from the Authority of the Church.

God is asking Australia to be faithful to the truths revealed by Jesus Christ. Fidelity to these truths means that the Catholic faithful have to know them better and deeper. The pastors have to present to the faithful these truths in its entirety and not watered-down or soft versions. It is sad to see that there are some who still do not know how to make the sign of the cross, do not understand the other parts of the Mass, etc. If Catholics live their lives according to the faith and its demands they will be in a better position to explain the faith to others, resist political pressure with respect to

religious matters, and get closer to God. There must be a program where the truths of the faith are explained and clarified continuously. There is already a reference material for this and it is called the Catechism of the Catholic Church or the Compendium. Pastors e.g. priests and bishops must not be afraid to mention these truths in their homilies. The Catholic faithful can easily detect homilies that deal with airy-fairy topics. God is also asking us to look outside ourselves more. Pope Francis is constantly reminding us to look out for the poor and marginalised etc. To look outside of oneself requires a deeper knowledge of what Jesus Christ has done for each one, and continuously does for each one. Australia is an affluent country and a lot of people are not living in want and if we are honest to ourselves we can be more generous with our money and time. It is imperative to make the faithful realise that helping the poor, the sick, the marginalised is not a task of a few but of everyone. God is also asking us to have more fortitude in resisting the current evils, and of having the courage to fight back and point out the errors in them. But as I mentioned above, this can only be possible if we have the proper knowledge and conviction of why these things are wrong. This also includes the resistance to moves to remove Christian symbols and words in everyday life e.g. religious freedom.

To renew our trust in God by becoming people that pray. Our faith can't be lukewarm. We need to have an individual love for Jesus Christ and in turn for our neighbour.

God is waiting patiently for the people to turn to Him. All that is going on NOW in Australia and in the rest of the world too, is despicable. The Transgender people have too much power now, bullying normal people into doing what they want done. Everyone has to try not to offend them. What about the feelings of other normal people? They have feelings too! God made MAN and WOMAN, and that is what He is asking of us to be now. Man and Woman, anything and everything else DOESN'T EXIST!!! Some of us, as human beings, feel for the way unborn babies are being treated, dissected and pulled out limb by limb from the mother's womb (God forgive those mothers who permit it), we cannot imagine what God, who created those little children, feels. God is asking of us to stop MURDERING those innocent little unborn babies, and soon, even the ones that are born alive, through failed abortions. ABORTION IS MURDER!!! Co-habitation is very common among unmarried people, and is a way of life now, and some priests also encourage people living in SIN to receive Holy Communion. God made MARRIAGE a sacrament, so He wants people to enjoy the Graces received in marriage. Many people come to Church inappropriately dressed, distracting others. GOD wants the priests to encourage the people to show respect for Christ in the Eucharist, and show reverence by coming modestly dressed. Some priests are very good at delivering good and instructive sermons, but Most PRIESTS do not STRESS enough, the importance of the Holy Eucharist, and some even encourage couples living in SINFUL Situations, to RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION. GOD wants the Religious, the PRIESTS to DO THEIR DUTY, and GUIDE His Flock, direct them in the Right Direction, to PREACH from the Pulpit, as often as possible, about Same Sex marriage, Abortion, Co-habitation, Immodesty.

I think God would want for the Catholic Church in Australia to be a Church that is safe for all people, transparent (with open policies and to be open to dialogue with those other Christians and non-Christians), to be guided by the Holy Spirit, to be less hierarchical, less dominated by males, acknowledging the value of the work within the Church of women, and the value of the voice of women, to be less clerical in orientation and power, to be more consultative with the range of groups and peoples, to have leaders who are humble servant leaders, to be less intimidating in liturgies so that people can feel more relaxed and welcome, with less strict liturgical rules (as the liturgical rules or correctness can be more important than the reach out to others), with greater opportunities for fellowship, to be more like the Church of the first century when people gathered to listen to the Word, break bread and share fellowship with each other, the "love in action" style of gathering. God surely wants us to cleanse the Church of abuse and to be open to helping and understanding, giving a voice to those who have suffered at the hands of any clergy. God is asking that we live more simply, that the Church leaders lead the way in this, that we use spare Church property for those who are homeless or in other ways needing shelter, our most basic need. God

would surely want us to stand up and be a voice in Australia against inhumane treatment of people who are in detention as refugees and asylum seekers, that we use our skills to treat such people for any mental health problems they have, to look on these people with love and compassion, acknowledging the trauma they have suffered and not make their situations worse. We need to be a voice to speak out against all forms of oppression, human trafficking and poverty, to see that the Gospels impel us to spread the Good News in action more than with words.

I think God is asking to make great efforts to preserve the family life and make all families like the Holy family. This may include:—All fathers should seek St Joseph as a role and to acknowledge the importance of masculinity within the family.—All families to have a deep devotion to Our Blessed Mother.—The protection of all children. I acknowledge this is broad, but this should be known to all faithful and non-believers. The Church should be able to invite pregnant women considering abortion to seek alternative options and have information readily available or at least open discussion regarding the importance of the foetus/children. In addition to this, parents should be made aware their marriage and holiness within the family makes a significant impact on the family.—Families should be reminded on the importance of life. Not only before birth but also near death. The Church should be able to provide the elderly and the sick alternative options to euthanasia. All people with this ideology of ‘culture of death’ should be addressed with sensitivity. The Church should make sure all people are loved and should remind people that people who live a full life have the potential to see their loved ones in Heaven.—Remind families (and individuals) the importance on practicing reverence within the Church and/or during Mass. Things such as appropriate outfit on Sunday Mass because we are in the presence of the Lord, genuflecting before the tabernacle, the importance of frequent confession, etc.

God wants each person to be a saint; always has, always will. I think that parishes throughout Australia can facilitate by providing consistent times of adoration, confession and means of formation in line with the magisterium of the Catholic Church. What I believe is lacking in parishes around our country is strong leadership from the parish priest. I should be able to look at a priest and see Christ; a man, madly in love with his bride, the Church, struggling to be a saint, and thus inspiring his congregation to do the same. The priest should be present at all parish activities. I also think that Catholic schools throughout Australia can help by continuing to share Bible stories with their students, especially those from the Gospels. I also believe that the following things are lacking in Australian Catholic schools: 1. Once-a-week Mass days for each grade, e.g. Year 6 every Monday, Year 5 every Tuesday, etc. 2. The praying of traditional daily prayers, such as a Morning Offering at the beginning of the school day, a Prayer Before Meals at Morning Tea and Lunch, a Prayer After Meals upon returning from these breaks, the Angelus at midday, any traditional prayer before dismissal and the rosary, especially throughout May and October, perhaps in place of the Morning Offering. 3. The explicit instruction of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. 4. Visits in the form of talks or Q&A sessions from the parish priest; as well as, 5. Learning about the lives of the saints. Ideally, every teacher in every Catholic school should be a practising Catholic, i.e. someone who goes to Mass at least every Sunday, goes to confession regularly and prays daily, etc.

We must take very seriously Pope Francis' call to be a Church for the poor. Many segments of the Church would not react kindly to a visibly homeless or impoverished person sitting next to them at a Church service—even though Jesus most certainly would have welcomed them. We are a wealthy organisation, and we perhaps need to spread wealth more evenly among parishes and dioceses—the ones who can collect the most are not the ones who need the most services. Jesus called for the rich to sell all they have and give it to the poor! We must be welcoming even to people who we believe live sinful lifestyles, such as LGBT+ people, or divorced people. Take the log out of your own eye first! No one is serviced by LGBT+ etc. being immediately shunned or lectured when they join the Church—or really ever. There is no doubt that they already know the Church position. We must treat them as our beloved brothers and sisters—as the Catechism reminds us to do—and facilitate their relationship with God as much as possible. If they feel judged they will only be pushed away. I think the Catholic weekly is very guilty of smug and unnecessary articles about the damage LGBT

people are supposedly doing to society. Perhaps they should instead be thinking about the damage they are doing to LGBT people. We must take the sexual abuse crisis very seriously. I don't think that we should make victims or their families go through a traumatic civil court process in order to get compensation. We need to look seriously into changing clerical culture somehow. Other than serious changes that require the whole Church, perhaps we can require priests to receive counselling every certain period—six months as an un-researched suggestion? This would also be a suggestion worth looking into because it's an extremely demanding and emotionally taxing job, and they are often moved away from families etc. We need to continue to be advocates for and helpers to refugees. Although this is not in the headlines as much as it has been in the past few years, there are still a great number of refugees needing help. This is an area I am proud of us in, although we can always do better. St Vincent de Paul particularly has done wonders for refugee families I know. But perhaps we can do more on an advocating for kinder policies level. I wish the bishops the best when they are considering these issues. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my perspectives. I pray for the bishops and the success of this Council.

Allow the Church to be humble, to be faithful and to be holy. So many of the errors of the past revolved around the Church trying to protect its image assuming that would safeguard its claim of authenticity. Whether protecting itself from scandal (abuse of minors) or protecting itself from irrelevance (by watering down the faith to accommodate the appetites of the Masses), Christ took it upon himself to safeguard the Church "the gates of hell would not prevail"; it is not our role to ensure Christ keeps his promise. The Church should allow itself to be vulnerable for the world to see its frailty and inadequacy so that God's sovereignty is ultimately made manifest. The Church should be bold in upholding the faith for which Christ and so many holy martyrs laid their lives. We live in a time of Christian hostility that seems to become more prevalent and radical. The shepherds of the Church should not try to shield us from the troubled times we must face. Rather we need to be fed the truth of the Gospel and be equipped with a bold faith to face the treats our Lord is willing to expose us to. The Church needs saints and it needs them desperately. The Church needs to really make this the ultimate goal of every endeavour it undertakes. The Church needs to discern and be willing to take the necessary steps to ensure this call to holiness is authentically expressed in all of its institutions, from parishes, hospitals and schools. One of my greatest frustrations as a father is that I will need to work against the Catholic school system to have a fighting chance my child remains Catholic.

To overcome difficulties and work towards peace and unity.

God is asking us to deepen our faith so that we can defend it and everything that it stands for. We are also asked to get actively involved in serving God and mankind through the Church's different ministries. God is asking us to do apostolate and lead more people to God.

First and foremost I believe God is asking us to be more accepting of all people, no matter the race, religion, age, married, divorced or even sexual orientation! Jesus was accepting of everyone. We need to remember than a majority of the rules/regulations within the Church are man-made, not handed down from God. Why should someone who by nature is gay be ostracized from the Church? Why should a divorced person not be allowed to be re-married within the Church should they wish? Their divorce may have nothing to do with anything that they have done, their partner may have left them for someone else! If they have a strong belief who are we to turn them away? After all, is it not up to God to decide whether they belong or not?! I also believe that God would be wanting us to allow priests to marry! As well as have Female priests!! I believe that God would be more accepting of contraception...after all is the withdrawal method not a form of contraception anyway?? It is not fair on a child to bring them into the world where parents do not have the resources to bring up the child.

Open its formal ministry to married women and men of Australia. Make celibacy optional for serving clergy. Most of the wisdom of the Church sits in the pews each week and listens to celibate men interpret societal life through their eyes. Not caught up in the messiness of life. Never having to experience day-to-day grief, marriage arguments, paying bills, looking for accommodation and the

lives of children. Tradition asks all humanity to coexist in equality. There are many lay women and men teaching seminarians, religious (male and female) and permanent diaconate in our universities. Open up the Church, Her heart is calling.

I believe God is asking each of his to be open to how the Spirit moves in us and our communities. He wants us to listen to one another and listen to our brothers and sisters in Christ (of other denominations) rather than place ourselves up on a pedestal and assume God is only speaking to us or that we all need to respond to God in the same way. God will reveal himself to us through a variety of faith, Church and life experiences. God will call us to experience him in different ways—some through traditional Mass experiences and others through more modern worship both inside and outside of Mass. Some will experience the coming of the Holy Spirit through expression of tongues that may be interpreted by some individuals. These charismatic expressions and experiences are gifts and God wants us to be open to these experiences and expressions as they are of himself. God also wants us to work together to understand what the Spirit is saying, rather than work against each other. How the Spirit moves within each of us may not be understood by every person, but it should be listened to and accepted as the Spirit moving within that person in a way that they can best receive him at that point in time. We should allow ourselves to be open to God. Rather than place him in a box of what is known, familiar and traditional, we should feel encouraged to move freely with the Spirit and understand the true message of hope the Spirit brings! Most of all, God is wanting us to respond to his call of Relationship, relationship with him and with each other. Young people in particular are in need of belonging and relationship. Young people need a personal relationship with Christ as without this, the world can feel like a hopeless place to many youths. The Spirit works through us to bring the message of hope to young people, hope in Christ. Young people connect with youth leaders, ministers and mentors in safe and welcoming spaces such as youth groups, more so than typically at Mass. We need to support youths attending youth groups so they can develop these relationships with youth leaders, and then be invited to Mass and be supported in their understanding of the Mass and how God works in us on our journeys in different ways. God works through these youth ministers and youth leaders who are very generous of their time and energy to do God's work in youth group settings which set strong faith foundations and relationships for many young people, which then work towards a faith journey that includes a personal relationship with Christ and the desire for faith experiences and expressions of God, through Mass, liturgies, praise and worship and other faith experiences. It's all about relationship with God and each other and knowing the best places for these relationships to be fostered! For young people, this tends to be youth groups rather than Mass and this is ok because we need to meet young people where they are at in order to then bring them to Christ in authentic ways.

He is asking for a return to faithful obedience to the teachings of Holy Mother Church and a reformation of our current corrupt culture to be conformed to the will of God.

It has been difficult years for us facing a lack of trust, unity and justice which are not from God but from our sins. Notwithstanding the circumstance we have been struggling, He is asking us to come close to him in unity in diversity within our Church to share the joy and peace He can only grant us.

After months of prayer and discernment, I have come to the conclusion we need to take better care of our clergy especially priests. Some of our priests seem to be lost, lonely and disillusioned. I found over the years, people put them on a pedestal which can be problematic if not worked through by a qualified spiritual director. Our priests need continuous direction and support by us all, which in turn will be very beneficial to the parishioners, the Church and ultimately our Lord!!!

I believe God is asking us to get in touch with the people through a huge 'shake up'. I will attach a detailed document of what that means to me.

I think God is calling all Catholics to rediscover their faith, to renew our love for the Church and our heritage, and to have a holy pride that we are Catholic—so much so that the deep joy we have in the knowledge that we are sons and daughters of God, rubs off on others, aiding our efforts in the New Evangelisation! We have all been shaken, in particular in the last decade, by the ongoing news stories of abuse and cover ups in the Church. It undoubtedly has caused many people to falter or

leave their faith. Those of us who stick with it, despite the many grave failings of members of our Church can feel a sense of shame about even being Catholic. I think we need to learn how to respond this, how to be compassionate while still being faithful to Jesus Christ—after all, He's the reason we are Catholic. There are also those who (in order to deal with this shame) disassociate themselves from the Church but claim a love for Jesus—we cannot love Jesus and not the Church, they go together. To rediscover our faith—I think this needs to happen at a parents/family/school/parish level, and in a very concerted, consistent manner, to impact on our kids and try to curb the increasing number of young people leaving. To bring back (in an approachable way) apologetics, solid doctrine and good philosophy (which would certainly help in combating relativism, which I definitely see among my peers as a major influence in their falling away from the Church). Bible study and the history of the Church to help with an appreciation of the richness and truth of what we have inherited as modern Catholics. To bring back \*real\* objective beauty to our parishes, that imparts some of the tradition of our beautiful Catholic art and music. The liturgy in the Mass can draw us in with all our senses. The beautiful words, the smell of incenses our posture and physical participation, the Church building itself, the music (!!!!) and the consumption of the actual Body of Christ. It is the place where we meet, worship and a joined with the physically present Creator of the entire universe—all things in the building should draw our hearts and minds towards Him. We have 2 things in particular that other Churches don't, and which are attractive to people of any background—the fullness of truth and great beauty in our traditions of art, architecture and music etc. Don't hide them!

1. Refocus on Striving for Holiness in Everyday Life accompanied by Practical Guidance from the Church. Back to basics, call to conversion, universal call to holiness, sanctity. Teach people how to pray, to develop an actual, real relationship with God and to fall more in love with Christ via prayer. Foster a culture of going to Confession regularly and also encourage priests to give Spiritual Direction to people. 2. Clear Undiluted Teaching of Authentic Catholic Doctrine. The faith taught in schools and parishes is so watered down. Homilies and religion classes are given as if the entire audience is in kindergarten. We're not stupid! We want to understand “why”. We want to understand the rich teachings and intellectual traditions of the Catholic Church, and we ARE able to understand them if priests/teachers ever actually present them. Ironically, if you want to guarantee your child to NOT practice the faith when they graduate, send them to a Catholic school. Unfortunately most graduates of Catholic schools aren't even rejecting Catholicism, they're rejecting the watered down parody of Catholicism that they've received from school. Instead of “anything goes” sex education, teach students Theology of the Body in schools and teach them the Church's pro-life teachings. Clear teaching on morality, including the “why's”. Clear teaching on what the Church actually teaches. Why not actively quote and promote the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Homilies that give pragmatic and practical advice to the congregation. Please stop being vague! “What’s the take home message? How can I apply it to my life?” Homilies should give specific advice for living out our Christian vocation in day-today situations for different age demographics. 3. Reverent, beautiful, prayerful, mature Liturgy. Liturgical hymns are so puerile and banal, with the theological depth appropriate for 4 year olds. Music that adults cannot just sing to, but also pray to. 4. Care for priests. I imagine many priests must be lonely. Perhaps they should live together in a common house? Ongoing formation for priests. Perhaps the reason it's so rare to hear an intellectually stimulating homily from a priest these days is because they themselves are rusty on their knowledge of the faith, philosophy, etc.

—Practice Holy Hour before Holy Mass. Maybe even with the Rosary.—Make Adoration (30 min to 1 hour) an essential part of youths group programs.—Properly Train Youth Leaders in Youth Offices. Invest your time in giving them degrees in Theology and Catechetics. We cannot have blind leading the blind.

The Church’s mission is what it has been from the very start—to make disciples of all the nations and teach them in the ways of Christ. The only way to remain faithful to this mission is to “hold fast to traditions—both that which are written down and those which are passed on through word of

mouth". The Catholic Church through its divine scripture, rich Tradition, and God's grace through the Holy Spirit has managed to survive for over 2000 years. It has survived through persecution, changing society, and indifference. We in Australia are currently facing all of the hurdles. How to tackle them? PERSECUTION—Bishops and priests, be strong in teachings of sexuality, marriage, abortion and euthanasia. Ensure Catholics know WHY these are the teachings. CHANGING SOCIETY—Go against the tide. Ensure priests make Mass beautiful and reverent through adhering to the text, correct and reverent gestures, and beautiful traditional music. Do not allow secular music. Make the Church a refuge for those who are disillusioned with societies' selfish ways. Offer God's word and His Mercy through reconciliation. INDIFFERENCE—The Church needs to teach the faith. It needs to teach the catechism. First in Schools. Do not allow principals and teachers to water down the faith to merely feelings and personal relationships. Those come after you know God. Adult catechesis is much needed. Encourage faith to be passed on through the family by first ensuring parents have the tools and knowledge to do so. What does God ask when times are hard? Trust, Prayer, and Steadfast faith.

- Consecrate ourselves and the Church to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Return to correct sacred liturgy and belief in Jesus truly present in the Eucharist.
- Preach again and publically the good news about God's plan for human sexuality and the lie we are being sold by a contraceptive culture.
- Remove the homosexual culture from the priesthood / hierarchy and hold every single cleric to the highest moral standard worthy of their call to be Jesus. Make sanctity and sainthood the unmitigated goal of every single prelate and religious and share this vision with the laity.
- Remove bishops and censure priests who teach false doctrine treating them as highly irresponsible, misleading souls and spreading confusion. Truth is not an idea to be debated, it is the unchangeable God.
- Theologians need to return to a Thomistic understanding of religion and spirituality. Modern theology produces nothing good, true and beautiful. It only provides confusion and hedonism.
- Promote groups such as 'Courage' who accompany people with same-sex attraction out of a life of dissipation into a truly integrated life as followers of the Christ.
- Do not compromise on the Truth, do not be ashamed of our great Catholic culture / civilisation.
- Censure groups such as "Catholics for Equality" as disloyal Marxists.

The Catholic Church is plagued by sexual abuse by some clergy who have destroyed the image of the Church. We need to remove these individuals from the Church and take all steps to support the legal jurisdictions as the Church has fundamentally failed to look after the innocent victims who didn't have a voice until the Royal Commission. The Church's outlook on gay marriages, contraception and divorce is irrelevant to modern society, hence the people have left the Church. The youths are disengaged from the Church and we have lost a whole generation and the current crisis with Cardinal Pell will further distance the youths which is a very sad situation. Acts 10:42 states that He commands us to preach the gospel to the people and He is the one God has appointed judge of the living and the dead. If this is the case, what gives the authority for the Church not to accept gay marriages, contraception and allow the divorcees to marry in the Church. We are all sinners and it is our duty to love everyone equally and accept everyone to our Church and it is God's job to judge us on the Judgement Day.

A renewed community of commitment and of faith that is filtered with enthusiasm inspired by grace and the Holy Spirit. I have always wondered what the Church looked like from the outside, those with who are not Catholic and not associated the Church or Christianity. What do we look like to them? How is it that we are to communicate the Christian message of the Good News? I believe this begins with the individual—fostering Christian discipleship. I believe the Church in Australia needs foundations in parishes, Christian home communities, youth groups, adult groups, groups for all stages of life—places and communities in which we can exercise and grow in our Christian identity of love and grace in which we are motivated to share this with all peoples. What is needed are platforms and foundations of Christian community life, to implement a Catholic "culture" of

community fostering growth in the qua Christian life. For example, the [ - ] and [ - ] Dioceses, "there are a lot of things happening"—events, retreats, gatherings—but where does one go to feel as though they belong to a community and take pride in it in which will take a person through the Christian life journey? (For example, the Emmanuel Community, the Opus Dei community—can this be achieved on a diocesan level? A National level? What charism—or culture—would you promote?) Very few places or groups can provide this, and they are hard to find and are few. Also, I've noticed the nature of "belonging to a parish" has drastically changed. An information age of social media, efficient transport from one place to another, what stops a person from picking and choosing a parish over another or even go "parish hopping." Not to suggest this is necessarily a negative thing, but the climate of today's nature of parishes—especially for the younger generations—this can really be used to a diocese's advantage. This is not to beg for uniformity for all parish cultures but a pluriformity in cooperation across a diocese to serve the best intentions for all Christians. I notice that this is being attempted in most dioceses I've been in by establishing teams of individuals to coordinate such efforts. However, can the process start even earlier? Possibly even as early as in seminarian formation to develop an attitude and culture amongst ministers of parishes to promote such an understanding of the nature of parish life according to the needs of the times.

To be faithful to the teachings of the Church by witnessing with courage in a society that no longer upholds the true meaning of marriage, does not value life from its very beginning to its very end and is totally focused on self rather than others.

I think that God is calling us to be a more inclusive Church in so many ways. It is time that our Diocesan priests ought to be allowed to marry—married Deacons have demonstrated that they can work and still be deeply committed to their ministry. It is a very lonely life for a parish priest to live alone—not a healthy way to love. There could be an option to have a group house and priests provide ministry to surrounding parishes. Lay people can meet the administrative requirements as many are highly qualified to do so—parish Pastoral Council need to be in every parish and have the power to govern. There ought be more women in governance within Diocese—trustees do not have to be male.

He is asking us to stop preaching and to live following the 10 commandments. Catholics have become more preoccupied advising how others should live and they are forgotten the 10 commandments the self and have become very judgemental. Social media doesn't help. Prayer was a discreet relationship with God and man. Now everyone wants to show they are religious by putting rubbish on social media. They are doing a disservice to God. Your actions and the way you live your life should be an example to mankind. Who are you to say to the gay guy you can come to the Church and receive? You are not God. Only God can judge, not you. Let everyone who wants to come to house of God to come. Don't discriminate and pass your judgment.

I think God is asking us to be true witnesses to a world that has forgotten, ignored and neglected Him. As Catholic Australians, we are called in these crucial times to show the world our Loving, forgiving and just God Who is the one and only to fulfil their thirsts: addictions, obsessions and insecurities. We are called to stand strong in our Faith despite all the attacks on the faithful: the legislations contrary to the teaching of the Church, the fall and the liberalism of clergy, the nonchalance of lapsed Catholics, the attacks of the media and the general public on Catholics in particular and Christians in general. We belong to our God, we belong to our Church... Our Faith is embedded in our lives and it brings joy and peace the world cannot give. We need to carry this reality with us to the whole world, a world that is hungry for good news, for true peace and true joy. We need: \* Adequate formation for lay people: Youth, engaged and married couples, religion teachers, priests ... \* Priests who speak good English. \* Priests trained in public speaking and homily delivery. \* Parishes that foster belonging as formal Sunday encounters are not sufficient to keep a community together. \* Availability of contact list of spiritual directors for lay people and a special emphasis on spiritual directors for priests. \* Governance and Accountability for liberal clergy who preach, speak and behave contrary to the Church's Faith. \* Primary children weekly formation by trusted and well-formed parents from the community. \* Teens/High school weekly Faith formation

programs fostering belonging and fellowship. \* CatholicCare to provide Catholic Counselling as government funding has opened the doors to all faith/no faith counsellors who have no idea about Catholicism. \* More 24-hour perpetual Adoration chapels around Australia.

6) The idea of Church as a community needs to be put strongly—put an effort to grow and share as a community of love/of people. 7) Small groups help to bring people together—to grow and pray; So facilitate small Christian Community concepts so that the love and fellowship can develop and each member feels wanted, belonged and welcome. 8) For young people need great and active ministries—altar serving; participate in serving with the Eucharist; choirs and community service. 9) Setting up youths groups—not segregated youths groups in each parish or lost within large groups, but connected in all parishes at each parish level; currently there are many parishes that do not have a youth group; these youths activities need to be well marketed throughout the diocese. 10) To have more organized themes across the diocese for the week. So that if a youths member goes to another parish, for the Weekend Mass, they are aware of the same theme that runs across the diocese. 11) To have more foot workers (at grass roots)—that would promote more participation. 12) In the current scenarios, when there are more atheists (31% Atheists and 21 % Catholics and Media hate), we need to market values and parts of our Catholic faith to the level of general public to use in daily lives in a way that general non-religious crowd can understand. Example: One of the youngsters, [ - ], who is on her first job after university, gave an example of how someone at her work place was sharing about something that she found in the bookstore and mentioned to others: it was a book having a page for each day where the person can write downs what the person is thankful for, on that day. That idea is always been there in Christian families forever. But it seemed to be made appealing to the general public by some publisher of notebooks/activity books for adults or young adults. 13) Permanent places for Catholic representation in Uni Campuses etc.—parish community or social community etc. 14) Vision of the Future Church where every Catholic is loved and encouraged to try to be in the spirit of grace:— Through frequent confession—to make this sacrament friendly and understandable;—Availability of spiritual direction within the parish context; and diocese context—Through this, the Catholic is discerning God’s will in daily lives. 15) Strong Intercessory Ministry within every parish: which prays for its priests and leaders—through prayer and sacrifices. 16) To have a lot more Blessed sacrament Adoration in most parishes. 17) The Catholic Church that promotes the prayer for Vocations in all parishes. 18) The Catholic Church that promotes more vigorously—strong unity among all Christians. 19) The Catholic Church teaches and it parishioners focus not on negative aspects of life but positive—always looking to the future with hope, trusting in God’s grace. Please see the attachment at the end of the submission.

I believe that we are being asked to create a more open Church, in which all people feel welcome and feel that they have a home. I believe we are being asked to be a primarily loving Church, towards all people, rather than a Church that is so often in today's society seen as discriminating against individuals and groups of people. I believe we are be called to create a modern Church which is fresh, dynamic, joyful and vibrant, and therefore attracts to itself. This does not mean abandoning the rich tradition of the Catholic Church, but rather looking for new ways to unpack, understand, and tap into this tradition. This also requires the Church to be open to new ideas and be willing to do things differently, rather than sticking to the old because it is what is known and safe. I believe we are being asked to create a co-responsible Church, in which clergy are not the only leaders of the Church, but lay men and women, young people, and religious all take on leadership roles at all levels of the Church in Australia. I believe we are being asked to create a more humble Church, which owns up to its mistakes and actively seeks to fix them and move forward. This means creating a Church which is honest and transparent, and does not become defensive when it is questioned to try and protect itself. I believe that we are being asked to create a more joyful Church that emulates the joy with which Jesus lived, and strives to foster and bring about the joy with which we are all called to live. This means that liturgies, homilies, and parish communities should be

vibrant and filled with enthusiasm, rather than stale and half-hearted. I believe that we are being asked to be a more outward Church, which reaches out to and serves people beyond its walls.

To be a welcoming community particularly to the marginalised without compromising the truth in regards to the Church's teaching which have been held close to our hearts for more than 2000 years.

I think God is asking the Church (us) to be opened to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The Catholic Church has been restrained from using the powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the Apostles at Pentecost and have left this to the other Christian Denominations'. The priests need to be encouraged to exercise these gifts for the benefit of their parish communities. Seminarians and Candidates to the Diaconate should be introduced and empowered by the Holy Spirit before they are ordained. Priests ordained should also be empowered by the Holy Spirit as part of their annual retreats so that they can demonstrate the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in their parishes. At these times of crises in the Church the Holy Spirit may be anxious that His power and presence is made available to the people of God. The praying over people for healing both physical and spiritual is used effectively in Charismatic groups and Pentecostal Churches. Apart from the monthly Healing Masses with the sacrament of Anointing, very little prayer ministry is available in most parishes. Healing prayer ministry should be encouraged and administered by trained lay people to those in need. Group prayer is very powerful particularly when praying for a specific intention. This is recognised by those who pray regularly for specific intentions whether they pray individually or in groups. The importance of spending quiet time with Jesus present in the Blessed sacrament must be encouraged. The praying of the Holy Rosary at least before or after one weekend Mass must be encouraged. I experienced this at a Church in Sri Lanka, on my return I introduced this at our monthly community Mass almost 10 years ago. We need to ensure that everyone is touched by the Holy Spirit with an experience that will last a lifetime and ensures that person knows that God exists and has a personal relationship with Jesus. Is Australia the land of the Holy Spirit? Do Australians / Catholics know who is the Holy Spirit? Enhance and stress the importance of the Eucharist celebration, to make it more meaningful, holy and attractive especially to younger people. Bring back reverence to the Eucharist celebration, this includes how people dress, act and speak, especially those who serve at the altar. Reverence in the receiving of Holy Communion and punctuality when attending Mass especially those who serve in various ministries. Catholic schools to be proactive in bringing children to Mass at least once a month. Have more lay people involved in the decisions being made in the Diocese, with an equal representation of women. Priests be more focused on the spiritual growth of the parish and not be burdened with administrative tasks.

—I think we need to pray more, we need to really be attentive to what the Holy Spirit is telling us. We need to be before the Blessed sacrament in Adoration before we make any decisions regarding the Church or even our own daily lives.

—We need more faithful priests, parishes to be readily open and available for more Eucharistic adoration and times of prayer especially in the evenings for those who work during the day and the working week.

—We also need better formation in our faith, what the Church teaches, particularly at the primary and high school level but formation that is true to Church tradition and not just simply to please the wider public or majority.

—More awareness of devotions like the divine mercy and first Friday sacred heart, first Saturday immaculate heart.

—A blending of the traditional and charismatic fruits of the Church, both traditional and charismatic are needed. By traditional, I mean like Latin Mass, Latin hymns, and Eucharistic adoration and by charismatic, I mean praise and worship, praying with each other and over each other, praying in tongues, because all of this is scriptural and sadly there is now a division between the faithful of those that don't think charismatic should belong in the Catholic Church.

—More formation on true masculinity and femininity, on the dignity of the human person. We have lost a lot of this through today's culture and society. Topics like theology of the body and dignity, vocation. Particularly among teenagers and young adults.

[ - ]: Vision—Vision of members of the Church with white robes (always trying to be in spirit of Grace); Members need to be cleansed each day (easy availability of sacrament of Reconciliation.— Also love of the sacrament to be promoted).—Church where there are no divisions.—All united.— There were instances in the marriage Vote where some clergy were not clear; Each parish was divided.—Growth of Spirituality; Personal experience of the Lord.

[ - ]: Vision—All people with good knowledge of faith; and living the faith.—As a community to have a protocol for attending the Mass with respect and reverence. —Encouragement by the Pastor all the time on the things that are important.—All member with deep Daily Prayer Journey.

Deacon [ - ]: Vision—All people living the faith; —All members—have a first place in their lives; — who have a personal Relationship with Jesus;—Make Mass the real source and summit of Worship— Members having real reverence and respect—Explanation of parts of the Mass and everyone has a true and good understanding—Scripture and Jesus in the Blessed sacrament to be centre of our lives.

[ - ]: Vision—Church that supports each other 1) Spiritually—2) faith and 3) Love—Charity : so we will not spent time outside—Members having a very vibrant faith—We need the knowledge and then gain the experience of faith—Members having a good and firm foundation of faith—especially given by the local pastor—Solid faith formation for all members.

[ - ]: Vision—All members growing in holiness; What does holiness consists of —1st Deeper love for scripture, Prayer and Mass; Daily discerning God’s will and doing God’s will—how? Regular True Catholic Spiritual direction made available freely for all members;—sacrament of Reconciliation available all the time and made as a joyful experience so that all are in a spirit of grace—All who attend a yearly retreat and grow into holiness—Man is body and soul and just as we do study and grow in skills we also need to develop our souls—Blessed sacrament to be the Centre of each member’s life

[ - ]: Vision—A Church where priests and Leaders: are real Leaders teaching the Truths; And standing for the truths;—Church where each member has reverence of the Spiritual;—All members truly and deeply worship the Lord in the Holy Eucharist and Blessed sacrament.—All having the right understanding of the Mass and looking forward to his Coming of Jesus who is a living Lord—Like the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holy of Holies should be revered; in the Blessed sacrament, in the church at all times.—We need Pastors who are true and holy—exemplary Shepherds.

Change and update some of the Mass Elements (Songs and Music) to be more Engaging, Relevant and Energised.

We need to be more compassionate in our treatment of those who have failed marriages. Women priests and the opportunity for women to give homilies. Overcome clericalism and its prestige, power and privilege. Need to adapt to the present and engage with people and families and acknowledge that people have limited time. Priests need more life experience and to be allowed to marry a woman. Homilies need to become a dialogue rather than a lecture. We need to collaborate and engage with our faith in flexible collaborative setting. Focus on the meal aspect of the Eucharist. Embrace social media and look at alternative ways to broadcast Mass. We need to use the talents we have end engage with young people particularly in our schools. Be a place of collaboration and consultation.

God is asking us to live in mutual harmony as people of God regardless of denomination and culture. God is asking us to disregard material possession as a factor when dealing with each other. We should pray more and go to Mass more, receive Christ and make devotions to help us in our growth as members of Church.

All young males should have a crash course in serving.

Build more bridges with society particularly outside of the Church (Interfaith Dialogue). Use more science to explain the faith. Stay in touch with the rest of the world and to keep growing Include all age groups, make events and meetings relevant to everyone and not just one age group. Renew our faith and relationship with Jesus and share our faith with the world. Letting our youths more involved and make feel comfortable with expressing their religion. More loving and accepting of

everyone around us. To step up and be an example for others. Listening to others and not judging others based on their response. To be an open, welcoming, caring community. To be a listening community. To be a courageous, creative community. To be a curious community learning about other Christian denominations and other faiths and what they can reveal to us about the one God we all worship. To pray for each other. Put yourself in other people's shoes. Vocations: looking for the truth.—Commitment to vocation. Importance of loving, living and warm community. Witness to our faith—sharing, expression of the truth. To become nicer to one another/more tolerable. To be kind and help those in need. Fix the Church's reputation particularly with a substantial response to the Child Abuse Cases. Helping people in need, establish a community and support network. Volunteer opportunities.

To respond to asylum seekers and refugees, to homeless people to exploitation of people. To look after "our home" as in *Laudato Si'*. To have good ways of speaking respectfully to people about these matters and to have information about communal involvement. Much good work in the Church seems to be known only to a few, when it could be a source of encouragement for living, reverence and involvement and giving hope to people in our families. To protect speech and speak without rancour. To overcome upset at failings in the Church. To continue to find ways to strengthen community, through involvement, Theological education, Liturgical education and Scripture. Sometimes this may not involve a course. To communicate at an ever deepening level with each other. To foster intergenerational involvement.

These suggestions all concern the celebration of the sacred mysteries: A return to the traditional music of the Church: music that does not excite the base passions, but lifts the mind to the contemplation of heavenly glory. An overall increase in reverence during Mass: no clapping or rock music. That the priest celebrate Mass facing most often the Blessed sacrament and the Tabernacle, in which dwells the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in his entirety, so that all the servers, congregation and choir may join with the priest and with the thousands of angels that come daily to worship at our altars in the worship and contemplation of Christ. And let it be kept in mind at all times and by all people that the Mass is a sacrifice of the infinite, offered to the infinite: a stupendous and supernatural sacrifice, to which the only proper attitude is one of the utmost reverence, solemnity and love.

We pray and send blessings to the Plenary Council 2020 members that you will be guided by the Holy Spirit to make life-giving decisions for the Australian People. You were chosen by God to represent him for his people and we are sure that in eternity you will be able to gladly account for your responsibility to God. A) We pray that the clergy and religious will stand strong (not be discouraged by the persecution) and uphold their vocation in holiness and dignity.—That they would NOT lose hope nor be scandalized by the very few who have destroyed their precious vocation of consecrated life. —That the consecrated would support each other in maintaining their leadership of the Church (because you priests and religious were chosen by God to give your whole life to God).— That celibacy would be maintained by priests and religious as a 'Higher Love' for God and His People (it is just impossible to serve two masters, the people in a parish and a family). It is proven with the high break down of families, where spouses cannot maintain just the one vocation due to the high demands of the world.—That the 'Woman and Mother' will find her higher role to raise holy vocations in families/communities and support our priests, but NOT seek to be ordained. In Jesus' time, His mother and other women did the same following Jesus even up to the cross. They were Servants of Our Lord. This is a BIG role. B) We pray that the Australian Church will Treasure the Sacredness of marriage (Husband-Wife marital relationship through the sacrament of marriage) thereby bringing life, security and love to spouses and children in families. C) We pray that the Australian Church will NOT incorporate the newly developed sexualized curriculum (The safe-school program and all that comes with it) in our Catholic schools; thereby enabling young children to maintain their innocence and purity.—That the Church would strongly uphold the teachings of the Bible and focus on forming 'Saints' even if it meant that they would lose funding of the secular government.

God wants us to be our brother's keeper expounding it to creating a strong legal system for the Church. The Catholic Church need to properly protect its brethren especially the Hierarchy, the vulnerable brethren serving the Lord. Strong Healthcare System which is holistic in nature... medical, natural, alternative but most of all Spiritual. Strong teachings on values and the Faith. Special attention to Education of the little children and the youths but specially too the loving, caring services for the aged and people with disability.

Listen to me in the voice of my people.

Thank you for this opportunity. God is much bigger than any of us can imagine and I really can't assert with certainty what God is calling us to. However, with my personal understandings and experiences of God and community I have a few thoughts to share. The Church is diverse and rich with history as well as possibility for who we could be. The Church is at work every day in Australia caring for the vulnerable, the people on the margins and our children in our schools. Its people who love and struggle in their daily lives to be faithful to God's calling and express the love of God in how they live. To continue to grow and flourish, and reflect the wholeness of who we are, I believe we need to find a way for all Catholics to participate in decision making and shaping our future. The bishops without the people are no Church. They are just a group of men. The people are the Church and we all are equal before God. People want the sacraments, they want to be able to celebrate the Eucharist in their communities, to welcome new members through baptism and the other rites of initiation. With the restrictions on who can be priest, we have so few. Yet, I am not sure there is a lack of calling, just a Church unwilling to recognise the calling of women, married people and gay and lesbian people to the priesthood. The priests we have are stretched to the limit, especially in more remote areas and often people have to travel so far for baptisms, Eucharist, Reconciliation and other celebrations. Extending who can lead a faith community and celebrate the sacraments will enable communities to flourish locally. Personally I want to see women ordained. I also recognise the huge leap this would be but I do believe God is calling us to recognise the powerful capacity for leadership women have and how much we are limping because on only one gender has power in this Church. We have many articulate and capable Catholic women in this country who could lead, speak, write and inform our discussions about the future. Let's be proactive about seeking them out, promoting and taking note of what they have to say. It's a start and something that can happen now. We are accepting married Anglican priests to the Roman Church (particularly those who disagree with the ordination of women) and giving them full priestly rights. Yet our own married priests cannot exercise their ministry. This is unjust and hypocritical and needs to change.

The following is a submission from a recent meeting of [ - ], [ - ], [ - ], [ - ] and [ - ] who are senior Catholic parishioners from [ - ] [ - ].

1. Married male priests: We have seen a recent newspaper article which states that the Vatican made a decision in 2009 allowing married Anglican priests to be re-ordained as Catholic priests. Why was this not shouted from the rooftops? If this decision has been made, then why does not the Church allow married male Catholics to be priests or Catholic priests allowed to marry? There seems to be a constant call for more male vocations to the priesthood.
2. Clear direction: There seems to be a lack of formal direction by Church leaders in regard to the basic tenets of the Catholic faith that we were taught. That is we must attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation if we are physically able, and be there for the Offertory, Consecration and priest communion. The absolute need to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and dire consequence do not seem to be stressed. As we understand the Church teaching, if we don't attend these Masses we have committed a mortal sin which can only be removed by the sacrament of Reconciliation. If we don't seek forgiveness we are heading towards eternal damnation and not eternal life with God. Is this what the Church is still teaching or NOT?
3. Commandments of the Church: In the Catechism of the Catholic Church published in 2005, clause 432 states the Five Precepts of the Church. These used to be called the Commandments of the Church:
  - Attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation.
  - Attend Reconciliation once a year.
  - Receive the Eucharist in the Easter Season.
  - Abstain from meat and observe fasting on established days.
  - Help to provide for the material needs of the Church.Is not observing all these five precepts

a mortal sin or NOT? The Church's current teaching is not clear. 4. Holy Days of Obligation: As we understand, in Australia the Feast of the Assumption is a Holy Day of Obligation, but not in all other countries? Why is a Catholic who does not attend Mass, is committing a mortal sin in Australia but not in some other countries? Many Australian practising Catholics would want to attend Mass on this day anyway, simply because of their strong faith. 5. Same-sex marriage vote: There seemed to be a very low key impetus from Catholic Church leaders for the NO vote. Many Catholics believe that the sacrament of marriage is for a man and a woman which appears to be God's teaching, but this did not appear to be strongly supported by high ranking Church leaders. A booklet was published in by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in 2015 titled Don't Mess With marriage. This was good, but after that, virtually no strong Church leadership objection. This was very disappointing. 6. Birth Control for Married Persons: The pill for birth control is for pre-conception not post-conception. How is this against God?

How we can truly act as the people of God in all aspects of our lives. Have we truly considered what is essential to being a missionary people spreading the Word of God and acting with faith, hope and love? How can we correct the mistakes of previous centuries in Australia by abandoning the acquisition of assets and instead devoting what resources we have to the genuine care of Australians, including Indigenous Australians, asylum seekers, immigrants and anyone who is on need? When will the Church stop acting like a profit seeking corporation and start acting as the Church, the people of God who show their faith by prayer and example. Christ gave us the new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Am I likely to see this in my lifetime because I haven't seen it yet? When will the Church governed by old men relinquish their power and share fully with lay people and clergy, both male AND FEMALE? Surely one of the lessons I am hoping to see the Church learn from the recent Royal Commission is that the vast majority of abusers of children were men given their authority by the Church, usually by ordination. The men who exercised governance and who failed to protect children and other victims were 100% male. Over the Christmas break, I watched the online video of the ordination of 4 priests at [ - ] cathedral [ - ] in late 2018. The video runs for 17 minutes before any woman is seen, just row after row of men in vestments processing, parading, sitting all together, being "other", demonstrating clericalism for all to see, yet no one seemed to think this was unusual. It is. It is wrong. It demonstrates an obsession with ceremony, form, tradition for its own sake. It is right up there with the clerics who spend years debating over the latest translation of the Mass (a particular interest of Pope Benedict and Cardinal Pell) but are blind to the evil being perpetrated within the Church? The words of consecration of the Mass can never be an exact translation of words used by Jesus, and all the other words have been ordered and assembled over centuries of debate. They are not a magic formula. The miracle of Transubstantiation at the centre of the Mass involves the celebrant using words similar to those used by Jesus at the Last Supper. Almost every other part of the Mass is a result of later additions. How can it be, and what does it say about the Church that its most senior authority figures could devote so much of their time and attention, and that of others to reviewing and revising those later additions, while they had no time at all to look after the victims of abuse by clergy?

Could we please have confession scheduled at parishes every week? Confession by appointment only means that no one can readily go.

We need to have Masses and adoration available outside working hours. I, and many others would love to go to weekday Mass and Adoration but they are only scheduled at times when I am working. In particular, adoration of a weekday evening at 8pm would be very beneficial to the parish and well attended by young adults and young parents such as myself.

To enforce traditional Catholic Church teachings. Return all tabernacles back to the Centre of the altar. Keep extraordinary administrators of Eucharist for extraordinary situations. Teachers in Catholic schools must only teach strict Catholic doctrine in religion classes and must be Catholics themselves. Phase out altar girls. More male adult servers encouraged. Have churches more accessible through the day. Daily Masses at all churches. Mass times to suit the working classes i.e.

6:00 am. Very holy priests that were silenced during 70s and 80s by the far left in the Church should be reinstated to positions of authority. Priests like e.g. Fr [ - ] who is my [ - ] [ - ] Church. A living Saint.

Catholic families in Australia live in a culture which is aggressively hostile to our faith, our lifelong commitment, and our impact on character development in our children. We generally receive instruction on marriage and family life prior to our wedding, but after that, we receive very little formation in the faith or in family life and child rearing in this area so we are ill prepared for dealing with societal pressures and influences. In the past, Catholic families may have been able to rely on advice from parents, prayer, Mass and the sacraments and all would be fine. These are very important, in fact essential, but today young parents also need to improve their skills and knowledge to work through the challenges they face in the family and society. Couples need to be able to talk through problems together through open communication, develop "game plans" to help their children grow in good habits and strength of character adapting their plans as the children grow. We believe the Church needs to find ways to provide good solid formation beyond just pre-marital preparation, supporting families not just through the initial "honeymoon period", but throughout their lives with young children, adolescents, and then adult children (and even grandchildren). The formation needs to be two-fold; Spiritual (i.e. doctrine, prayer, etc.), and family life (communication in marriage, character development in children at different ages, how to address societal/cultural challenges such as use of smart phones, social media, aggressively secular entertainment and media, pornography, unhealthy body image, inappropriate and pre-marital sexuality, pressures to limit number of children, etc.).

Generally Catholics today are very poorly formed and have little or no interior life (laypeople and priests). A small percentage of Catholic take their faith seriously, attend Mass more than once a week, receive the sacrament of confession regularly, do daily vocal/mental prayer, study and meditate on sacred scripture etc. Our Church is not healthy, we need to get back to basics. However, to do this would require a significant mobilization of well-formed laypeople and priests. It would require a "cradle to grave" program of formation. Homilies must be well prepared, regular confession encouraged, hot topics need to be spoken about openly and clearly (The Church's teaching on contraception, homosexuality, promiscuity, masturbation, same-sex "marriage", Divorce and Re-marriage, etc.). We need to promote and encourage large families and provide them support, teach people how to have a deep prayer life, teach the beauty of sacred scripture and the catechism. We need to get back to basics.

God is asking the Church to do what Jesus asked which is "to love one another as I have loved you". The Church hierarchy and parishioners should share the Eucharist and be inclusive to carry the message to the community. The Church could be creative in the way it opens its arms to include young people to take their direction and involvement. There is a lot of positivity in the Church. It should be mindful of those that have been hurt by individuals and go out of the way to help them to ensure crimes never happen again or at least are dealt with quickly. There could be a new sense of renewal and positivity with Christ at the centre of the Church is courageous and forward thinking.

I believe that Our Lord is asking for more strong formation in order for the people of Australia, young and old, to receive greater clarity on the teachings of the Catholic Church. From experience, I grew up in a good Catholic school run by Opus Dei and they gave me good foundations on my faith and how to live it. However, having left school and gaining friendships over the years with many people outside of school, I am surprised by the amount of people who don't even know some basic foundations of the Church such as the sacraments, living out your vocation in a holy and devout way (as well as discovering other vocations besides marriage) and how it's different to a career in life, the importance of the Holy Spirit and many other topics that leaves Catholics with a very low or skeptical understanding of what the Church is and how it is working in our world today. The absence of solid formation impacts the way in which Catholics are seen and represented in society as they now "fit in the crowd" when in fact, Christ calls all of us to step out and live that radical Christian life through a

life of love—not a shallow love that makes people just smile through everything, but a love that dives into each and every aspect of one’s life including areas that are vulnerable and difficult for most people to show. It is vital that the world sees the authenticity and genuine love of Christ through our witness as Christians. However, it will be difficult without the need in solid foundations of Catholic teaching. From these foundations, strong Catholics will emerge and thus help Australia to be formed through the witness of Christ's encounter within the hearts of those who have been taught the beauty and fundamental values of the Catholic Church.

To love one another as Jesus loves us. I believe each of us as Catholics need to be clear about this when making political decisions especially regarding refugees, the disadvantaged and outcast. Jesus would be the first to have pity on refugees, to ensure even the poor have good healthcare and education, to ensure people on the fringes of society like abuse survivors and gays are not made to be outcasts. I also believe it is time to return to the family unit—especially in this age of internet, globalization, high divorce rates, children moving out of home with no assistance from parents going forward, the elderly not getting cared for from their children. Not only does God teach us to honour our parents and partners and children and ourselves but communal practices such as attending Church and having a family lunch afterwards and a day with family is an important way to preserve this. I think God is also asking us to be contrite. Many of us now in all echelons of society—business, Church, politics, media—have been excusing certain actions they have done when we should have compassion and empathy, understand when we have sinned and be sorry for it.

To stay faithful to the Church and its teachings despite the challenges we, as the lay faithful, are faced with in these times. To help others understand the beauty and joy of the Catholic Church. For parishes to be a place of belonging. To learn to communicate with those who don’t share the same values with love in a non-judgemental way but without relinquishing the truth.

Discernment. How do you "fix" a young child who was victimized by someone who should have protected him/her, that someone who supposedly represented Christ and who was trusted by adults and more so, children? These innocents are now adults who are bitter, angry, or even misfits in society! What is God asking of us? For one thing, He was asking that we protect our children—in this, the Church failed miserably! He asks us to discern between genuinely committed, dedicated members of the clergy and sexual predators of our children. He wants us to recognize that priests are mere mortals—that in our dealings with the Church, our faith must be buoyed by an ironclad relationship with God that is based on His truth and His goodness.

It seems easy for me to say what God is asking of me but I'm finding it difficult to say what God is asking for all of us in Australia. I think God is asking us:

- To branch out of our usual friendships and be true, deep friends with people from all over.
- To ask God to help us be better communicators of piety and doctrine, and unpack terms like freedom to love to understand true interior freedom to truly love, forming the conscience.
- To take on those projects, businesses and ideas that God wants us to pursue not only to care for the earth but to develop those relationships with genuine agape love, imagination and creativity.
- To realise that He is right next to us ALL the time and will speak to us through the most unlikely people.
- To practically develop the talents and skills He's given us so we don't have to make work, essentially His work, harder than it needs to be (practical home management skills, office processes, understanding social norms of people who have yet to have a relationship or grow their with God).
- To practically understand the unity between the body and soul so we can develop humanly, spiritually, professionally, in Catholic doctrine, sharing Him through apostolate.
- To be more discerning, smart and prudent whether our good intentions, (and the actions that stem from them) could be unintentionally divisive.
- Honestly, I think He wants us to have more fun with what he's given us (material, personality, skills) whilst maintaining them and taking care of them properly and in a sustainable fashion.
- Randomly, I think God is asking us to genuinely befriend our bully, for bullies to ask for genuine forgiveness not for selfish guilt-relief.

—Seek him out everywhere and have fun while doing it.  
—Just be better mates.  
—Lastly be better and sincere communicators of the good the Church does for society, the poor, vulnerable and discriminated whilst being humble and aware and empathetic of societal opposing views.  
—To make "Church"-life more accessible (e.g. As if a camera was on them 24/7 like a reality show but within the Vatican). It's very difficult for audiences to resonate with documentaries about life in the Vatican, life of a priest and everyday life of Catholics.

God is asking us what He asked us when He first inaugurated the Church's mission: to preach salvation to the world, to be the salt of the earth. To do this, the Church needs to uphold and PROCLAIM the moral teachings of the Church, especially in regards to the immorality of Same-sex 'marriage', abortion, contraception, and euthanasia. The people of the Church need to be formed in understanding what the Gospel message is; they need to be formed in apologetics, in understanding exactly what it means to be a follower of Christ. Priests need to be encouraged to lead their parishioners: people cannot follow Christ if they have no leader. The prevailing current pastoral rhetoric of 'love everyone' (but giving no concrete means of this, and of how we must love in a way that often offends. Christ did not come to bring soothing peace, He challenges our sinful nature), 'everyone is equal' (what does that mean though in regards to why Same-sex 'marriage' is wrong?), and the general subjective interpretations allowed of Church teaching. Lay people are not formed in morals: so many people do not know WHY the Church condemns issues such as contraception (because contraception is damaging to the individual). The Church is not a democracy where the majority of lay people decide how their priest will preach the Gospel. The priests have been entrusted with the mission of forming and leading souls to Heaven, but there seems to be a current of fear in preaching the Gospel that often contradicts current norms and lifestyles. The liturgy of the Mass is often shockingly irreverent in many churches, and this is a degradation of the Eucharistic celebration. Young people are being attracted to the Latin Mass as this actually reverences the great Mystery of the Eucharist, and does not reduce the Mass to a 'celebration' of 'equality' for all people. Christ says the lukewarm will be vomited out of His mouth, and the Australian Church is largely like this at the moment. Lay people need to be given the beautiful truths of the Catholic faith so that we can stand as a witness to society of the truth of Jesus. Protestant churches flourish because they are given leadership and formation, while Catholic lay people are left wondering what the purpose of Mass is, and their faith becomes simply a boring habit. We are not afraid of the truth, and we need to be challenged, just as Christ challenged the world by His teachings. If Jesus comes again, will He really find any true, tested, tried, real faith in Australia? Or will it simply be the smooth dregs of Catholicism that Church leaders feed to the laity for fear of confrontation should Jesus' truth actually be given them? Young people need formation, we need the Church to step out and lead us to Christ. We are not afraid of challenges, of persecutions. We are searching for our identity and we want a battle for our faith. We want to spread the Gospel to all people.

I believe God is asking us to consider closely the words of Jesus Christ in everything we do. This is even more important in how we shape our faith and the way we celebrate it. I believe God has given us the tools and knowledge to resolve today's problems of climate change and the loss of biodiversity, violence, hatred, and ignorance, which has a direct relationship to the lives we as humans, including the poverty (both monetary and morally) we see in our community. Australia is in a very good position to take the lead on these issues with our ingenuity and our mix of cultures coming together in the one faith. In order to do this and to capture the best that the Church has in Australia, we need to include everyone and consider their inputs—not just in offering a ministry, but also in shaping the fundamentals of what the Church believes in and will commit to encouraging within the community at large. God speaks to every one of us, not just the Church hierarchy. This Plenary Council is a great start on that process, but this needs to be constantly updated in the coming years. The Church also needs to win back its credibility. Sadly, the actions of a few over the past years have created great pain for all Catholics. By following Jesus' messages closely and

listening to what he is telling us today, we can win back lost credibility by setting standards we know Jesus wants us to live by. To bring about a change of mindset required to move the Church closer to Jesus may also require a change in how we celebrate Mass. We know that God sent out disciples to speak to the different communities in their own tongue, yet we find that all too often the Mass celebrates a Roman culture with much Latin creeping into the Mass. This may only seem a minor issue, but it does suggest that the Church is still a Roman entity. This is not what Jesus wants and in fact in Mk 7:1-13, Jesus states, "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching us as doctrines human precepts". It is imperative that Church keeps Jesus teachings at its heart, and ensures that cultural precepts do not form the basis of our faith. Jesus has given us that basis already—we just need to understand what this means in our lives today, and those of our children.

I think that God is asking us to take this opportunity to undergo a thorough transformation as a person and as a Church, and to let go structures and practices that corrupt the life of the Church.

God is asking of us... The Church to become a safe and loving place for hurting people to come to experience God's love and healing in their lives To live the Gospel, with humility and courage. Faith is not enough without community. We are called to spread the gospel and make the Word come alive in our community and we need instruction and help on evangelisation and how to "do" the mission of Jesus in a secular world. Reach out to others inside and outside the faith and the Church. Include the marginalised and the disaffected. Increase Ecumenism and Interfaith engagement. Foster support of families and young people and include them more in the liturgy; be more welcoming, especially at Mass. Teach and learn more about our faith and the teachings of the Church Grow the leadership of the Church to include more laypeople, especially women. To address the shortage of priests through: prayer for vocations; introducing optional celibacy (allowing priests to marry, or to admit married men to the priesthood), ordination of women to the diaconate, ordination of women as priests. To increase the trust in the clergy and ensure the safety of children, women and vulnerable people. To support with compassion those who have experienced sexual or other abuse by the clergy and others in the Church. To increase participation in the sacraments, especially Reconciliation. To increase the use of the 3rd (Communal absolution) rite of Reconciliation. To strengthen the engagement of laity in parish ministries and liturgies by restructuring leadership and spreading the leadership and decision making load from the parish priest to the laity. For more details, see the attachment "Plenary Questions response in [ - ] for Submission in March 2019.pdf"

I think that God is asking all of us to make an effort to have a deeper, more real relationship with Him. He wants us to let him into our lives, and to share our lives with him. He is asking us to accept his love and the graces he is constantly bestowing upon us. He is asking us to stop ignoring him, as if we exist independently of him. He is asking us to allow him to teach us how to love. And to make all of this happen, the Church, its members, and its leaders must be apostolic. But we can only give what we have and what we know. So we all must make an effort to continuously improve on being better Catholics. We cannot simply be satisfied with our current understanding of Catholicism. How well do we know our faith? How well do we know the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Do we try to learn more about our faith periodically? Have we read any of the papal encyclicals, for example, St John Paul II's Theology of the Body? Do we take advantage of the sacraments as often as we can? Do we go to Mass, at the very least Sundays and holy days of obligation, and if possible on weekdays also? Do we go to confession regularly? We all need to become better. And we need good Church leaders who will show us the way; Church leaders, both priestly and lay, who are committed to the truth, and who love Jesus Christ; saintly men and women.

1. Need for solid doctrine based on CCC delivered in a clear and simple way (delivered in homilies, in Catholic schools, sacramental program to include not only the kids but parents as well, a program to educate volunteers).
2. Real presence of God in the Eucharist.
3. Formation of priests.
4. Education of Parents through FEA courses.
5. How to involve the youths more. Have more structure in youth formation.
6. Unity of teaching in the Church.
7. Uniformity of formula of liturgy.
8. The example set

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| <p>by priests, how do priests make themselves available? 9. Healing of those who suffered painful experiences in the Church. 10. Assistance to those who suffer difficulties in marriage.</p>   |
| <p>1. To encourage young people in their faith as part of the curriculum in Catholic schools both primary and secondary. 2. Empower university chaplaincies and their supporting priests. 3. Better teaching of medical students in the care of terminally-ill patients, palliative care, issues of euthanasia. 4. Embrace traditions and customs of migrants and incorporate them into the Australian Church perhaps by celebrating or making it known in the Australian calendar. 5. Supporting Catholic associations and recognising them.</p>   |
| <p>To reach out to those who stopped going to church by being more active in sharing our faith.</p>   |
| <p>Consideration of the following issues: Clericalism. Celibacy. Priest training, mentoring, ongoing professional learning for all priests and appraisal to honour and support their commitment. Importance of transparency in policy and practice. Accountability in all matters. Role of women at all levels. Deal with the issue of sexual abuse, victim pain and suffering, failure to listen and believe all those damaged at so many levels and crash through the widely upheld practice of cover up.</p>   |
| <p>We surveyed our school community and their responses to the changes they would like to see in the Church today are recorded below: Greater flexibility with Masses. I think reverence in the Mass is lacking in many parishes in the area and I find the ones that are more traditional have an excess of people attending Mass on Sundays. People, especially the younger generation, need strong guidance from the Church and they don't need wishy washy homilies or modern music to make them feel good. They need a true understanding of the Church, its teachings and especially the catechism. The catechism is hardly emphasised by priests or schools currently. This is something I know about only through my own reading. Also, dress code at Mass is really lacking these days. People need to be more respectful with their dress and priests need to enforce it. Increase demographics and participation. Nothing you're doing well God bless. Be more inclusive. More of involvement. Mass should be lovely and louder with carols. Involvement of kids in the carol signings in Mass. Involvement of all parish members. None, I am happy with the Church engagement—modern practices—less hierarchy. Other than the general issues stated above, I feel the [ - ] [ - ] parish is a wonderful parish. More family interaction and groups. And possibly families' Mass. Very happy with the local Church and parish priests. Very kind and approachable. Attending Mass and praying with my family before dinner and encouraging prayer. Also, by attending school Masses with my children, I find extremely beautiful and special. I love hearing the children singing. Going to Mass. Reading the Bible. Attending adoration. Priests need to engage younger generations and not listen so much to older generations.</p>                    |
| <p>Submission to The National Plenary Council 2020—2021 Paper: 1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? I can't speak for God, but I can for myself in saying the Church is in a state of turmoil, a Church in tatters, a Church that has in many ways lost its credibility, both within the Catholic Church and to the world at large. There is need of intense scrutiny of the established Church as an organization and more importantly the Catholic Community needs to be a partner in this scrutiny. There is no way that this objective will be in any way successful, unless the Catholic Community comes in with substantial voting rights in this process in their own right. If this doesn't occur than the Church will continue a dictatorial role that doesn't really represent, nor has taken to heart, the voice of the people. I have heard that in the organizational Church: The Hierarchy represents 1% and the Laity constitute the other 99%. How will the Plenary Council achieve equity without genuine voting rights? VATICAN CITY (AP)—Pope Francis issued the mission statement for his papacy in 2012. Pope Francis said: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security," he wrote. "I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends up by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures." In other words, the Catholic Church has to be prepared to work hard at seeking solutions. This will not be achieved if everyone arrives with their pre-conceived perceptions and are not prepared to move, but rather a genuine dialogue is needed so that new positions may be forged, at times, with the heat of fire, to</p> |

forge new beginnings. Also, at times to step back and realise that there is no agreement. Dr Kevin Treston in his new book: "The Wind Blows Where It Chooses" has this to say about Church Renewal. "Church renewal is a hollow sounding nothing without the impulse of the vital energy of the Holy Spirit. Efforts at Church reform descend into competing ideologies if the efforts are not grounded in deepening God's embrace of love for us and the whole of creation. One of the most urgent challenges in sustainable Church renewal is reconciling divergent positions of groups; or at least helping people to live with the tensions of differences in order to foster a communal unity in the body of Christ. The path of Renewal will be one of seeking courageously to determine new pathways for the Catholic Church because it certainly deserves a new and creative presence in the world in which we live. The process will at times will be quite difficult especially with a number of opposing views. But the Church and the Catholic Faithful deserve so much better a renewed Church than the crippled Institution that we have presently created. In Christ, Our Lady, St Gemma and Padre Pio [ - ].

As always, God asks that all of us be holy, responding to His love in the way we live our everyday life, seeking to grow in a loving, trusting relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, desiring to do His will in whatever circumstances arise and to love one another as He has loved us. Living a sacramental life with a continued and renewed formation in the faith as a basis to deepening our personal relationship with Jesus. Personal transformation—which requires continual conversion, instruction in sound doctrine, participation in the Church's sacramental worship and the acquisition of an ethical and mature social conscience. Catholics to be firmly rooted in our own religious tradition, as faith can have no home in a culture untouched by the Gospel; through parishes, families, schools, prayer groups etc., we need to find an environment in which we can internalise our religious heritage. A sense of a Catholic identity—as members of the body of Christ and a realisation of our personal accountability before God. A missionary spirit to prepare the faithful as Christians in society, to engage in dialogue in the culture—to stand up for the truths of our faith. To have a strong sense of community within the parish—so people feel they're home, a place of refuge and belonging. To encourage parishioners to have a spirit of evangelisation. Profess our Catholic faith, and faithfully follow the teaching authority of the Church. Love for the Church's spiritual and devotional heritage in particular, Marian devotion, devotion to the saints and the vow to religious life, penitential practices and especially Eucharistic worship. A commitment of service to human society by the life of the Church's social doctrine with our understanding rooted in a strong knowledge of the faith. Speak out and defend the basic rights to life from conception to natural death. Bishops and priests to form the convictions and attitudes of the faithful—not watering down the Gospel. Religious educators to present the Christian message faithfully, in ways that make it intelligible, credible, interesting and relevant to the hearers. Catholic schools, colleges and universities, to protect, guard and have pride in their religious character. School and university students to be given access to knowledgeable, compelling and faithful speakers; to inform and form their decision-making and to facilitate dialogue in the midst of the current culture. Safeguard and support the family by supporting monogamous marriage between a man and a woman. Support, formation and engagement with the Church for families at every stage of life. Perhaps have family mentors, i.e. older couples to mentor and support younger couples physically, socially and emotionally. Encouragement of vocational aspirations when young- in family, school and Church life. Priests and religious to be supported in their ministry to enable them to meet the demands of the vocation.

I feel very encouraged in my Faith when I go to a Church for Mass and the priest spends some time praying in front of the Blessed sacrament and shows his faith in his genuflections. I wish all priests could realise how much this helps their parishioners.

Keep it original. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow he will never change so I say keep it the same as it has always been. Keep it original.

To stay as good as it was as when Jesus came and not to change, because Jesus made the Church perfect.

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| <p>To return to our Roman Catholic traditions, support our clergy, promote Adoration, encourage vocations, support parents trying to guide teenagers and young adults into a chaste and moral life</p>  |
| <p>I feel that part of the generation today has not been going to Church for the meaning about it and receiving our Lord. They are more going because the parents or guardians are more just expecting them to go. If we follow the traditions of the Bible and the Word of God, we should stay on the right path of faith. We need to do things that the older generation did so that people remain true to the Church as they are.</p>  |
| <p>I've recently moved to [ - ] parish [ - ]. It quite a vibrant community with all ages involved. 1) I would prefer though that everyone didn't have to hold hands during the Our Father in the youths Mass. 2) The confession time available is only one hour on a Saturday and I don't think this facilitates people trying to get there—if a longer time was available, I think more people would take advantage of the sacrament. 3) During weekday Mass early morning, people get nervous and race out early when the homily is given or too long. Probably the best thing is to give either no homily or a one liner during early week day Mass.</p>   |
| <p>The Church needs to show transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and listen to the people.</p>   |
| <p>1. The Catholic Church needs to stop covering up clergy abuse and remove all these paedophile priests from the Church and announce to the public the action taken so that it is transparent to everyone around the world. The Catholic Church is seen as protecting the paedophile priests and paying hush monies to the victims and we need to change this practice for its survival and to rebuild trust. 2. We need to actively find ways to bring the youths back into the Church and we have lost the young adults as we did not engage with them in a way that appeals to them. Whilst Hillsong Church has attracted these young adults and youths and they are full of energy and helping their Church to grow in a big way. 3. Make Praise and worship mandatory for family and youths Masses and assist our priests to give exciting and stimulating homilies so that the parishioners take this message home and apply them. We want a lively Church that inspires young people, otherwise our Church will consist of old folks and new migrants and the rest will move to other Christian churches over time. Or we will have people come for special occasions only and rest of the year the church pews will be empty. 4. My husband and I are devoted Catholics but we do watch Joel Osteen on TV as we are so inspired by his messages. Why can't the Catholic Church learn from these pastors and introduce this style of preaching in our Church? 5. Make our Church transparent, compassionate and humble one and stop judging people who traditionally fit into the Catholic Church.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking us to be a community of prayer, praise and worship with a focus on Jesus only. Most Catholics outside of charismatic gatherings are not exposed to praise and worship. If you want to bring the youths to Christ, the answer is praise and worship. We need: *A greater emphasis on praise and worship at all services, especially Mass. *Hymns to Mary and the saints after Mass. *No vocal prayers, rosary or novenas to Saints during Adoration. *All devotions outside main service. *Study of the Bible and the readings of scripture. *Greater tolerance towards other Christian churches and working together and inviting them to participate in services and community activities. *Ensure that Jesus is in the heart of everything and preach his name without hesitation or excuse. * Know people by name. *Go to the laity and accompany them on their journey to faith. The future of the Church is in the hands of the laity. In light of the decline in priestly and religious vocations. We need to consider the need to appoint women deacons. Greater powers to be given to deacons to baptise, conduct communion services, conduct funerals and witness marriages. Return to Jesus' mission of service and love and away from a men's only club. Abolish celibacy. The importance of giving every worshipper a fair go. Every Catholic who approaches the altar for communion does so in a spirit of repentance for sin and a yearning to receive Jesus. The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect, but food given by God to nourish and sanctify us. Communion should be available for all baptised Christians attending Mass, divorcees wishing to remain in the Church and members of the homosexual community if they want it. The third rite of reconciliation needs to be made available outside of emergency situations. Sin is not just personal, but social and communal as well. It was only in the mid-16th Century that the confessional was introduced and 20th Century saw Pope Pius X</p> |

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| <p>encourage frequent confession. We need to reclaim our right to the Third Rite of Reconciliation as outlined by Vatican II. Ban indulgences. The practice of indulgences being received by fulfilling certain conditions is still a cause of many leaving the faith. The forgiveness of sin comes from God. God's love and mercy are without condition and the practice of making pilgrimages and other practices to receive indulgences is a scandal. The language of the liturgy needs to be updated so that it is easily understood and reflects the way we speak in Australia. Use the New International Bible. Communion should be under both species at all Masses. Vestments should be chosen at the discretion of the priest, particularly during extremely hot weather. Care for the aged. We need to evangelise and speak God's name without fear. Decorating magazines promote Buddhas and Krishna statues to promote peace, but one never sees a crucifix and Christian symbol. We have come to believe that we can decorate with these things with no harm. Return to God.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking us to reclaim the Church from the people who have controlled and manipulated us. God would not want men lying, abusing and destroying lives. Jesus walked this earth to show us the way to live as Christians. The betrayal is soul-destroying.</p>  |
| <p>He is asking us to have more charity to our neighbours and those we live amongst. We're inclined to think more of what we want where as we should be concentrating on those that have far less. We should be more aware of those people around us and what assistance they might need</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Australian Church should address the effects of Media on our lives and on the Church. All people and groups need a fair hearing it is not trial by Media.</li> <li>• We need to have Obvious Leadership of the Laity within our Church.</li> <li>• We need more emphasis as a Church on the people of our parish rather than on the laws and commandments our faith is governed. We must encourage an environment that is welcoming and greeters who are truly welcoming and interested in you as a person. The Church needs see sexual relationships for pleasure and not just for procreation.</li> <li>• The priest needs to know they are called by God to serve and not to rule and we need to have greater support for our priests as the Church can be a business with great amounts on capital and assets that need to be organised and financially managed. We need transparency of the financial situation in our parishes.</li> <li>• People must get involved and join in the Church we can do this by the re-introduction of home Masses and Rosary in the home These both build community spirit.</li> <li>• Mass so different from the Last Supper. Jesus and his friends celebrated and then he told them he would leave them, so he said to them 'remember me every time you break bread.' Mass is irrelevant for today we need to revive the Mass to be more interactive.</li> <li>• The Church needs to align itself with the teaching of Jesus. Be Inclusive and follow the great commandment "To love God, love your neighbour and Love yourself".</li> </ul> |
| <p>To foster and encourage a greater lay involvement and maturity in our parish communities.</p>  |
| <p>Deeper formation of our Faith for the youths in schools and the parish Churches so as to foster a strong and solid knowledge of the truths about our faith, love and devotion to basic truths, the love for the sacraments, the practice by heart of the ten commandments, fostering piety, loving the Marian devotions, esp. the Holy rosary, deepening of our prayer life, building virtues and character formation, etc. Involve the youths in activities at Churches and communities. Have an atmosphere of love, peace, joy and family. We have to be Strong Catholics and Happy Catholics!</p>   |
| <p>Sacramental Programme. It has been my experience that sacramental programmes vary in effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have found it good experience when small groups meet at home</li> <li>• It can happen sometimes that the content is watered down (e.g. the Eucharist: there may be no emphasis on the Real Presence).</li> <li>• It would be a great opportunity for formation of parents if used well.</li> <li>• The emphasis for the children is more around drawings/puzzles which don't draw the parents in.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>To be holy.</p>  |
| <p>I believe that God is asking the same thing he has asked Christians for all time. That we make ourselves familiar with the teachings of the Catholic Church in order to convey with confidence to our families and friends the path to happiness in this life and in eternity. How we can best achieve this is providing classes on Doctrine, sacraments, etc. My personal experience with other baptised Catholics is that formation is lacking and people know some things about their faith but not what is</p>   |

needed to make informed decisions about their life path. As a Church community, we need to make attending Sunday Mass an attractive idea, especially to teenagers, young adults and young families by having morning teas for everyone after Mass. More support for parents of young children through babysitting services. Teams rostered to visit the sick and help others to do their shopping. In short, to bring our parish communities working together. Parish priests need our support also practically and psychologically. Great respect for priests is necessary, remembering that without them we wouldn't be able to receive Our Lord in the Eucharist. They need encouragement like everyone else and are not meant to be the receptacle for complaints and rudeness. On a practical level, meals can be provided by a roster of cooks to those priests who have to cook their own meals, keeping in mind any dietary needs.

He is asking us to look after the planet He has given us. He is asking us to love others in spite of our differences. He is asking us to teach young people to know what is important. He is asking us to reach out to the marginalised and the vulnerable. He is asking us to remember that power is never more important than love. He is asking us to share the love, the gifts and talents we have with everyone. He is asking us to remember that being Catholic doesn't mean non-Catholics are in any way less than us.

Formation of the people of all ages. Deeper Formation of priests. Formation of teachers in Catholic schools and catechists. Foster piety love and devotion to the faith that we have as Catholics. Improve relationship with God and neighbour through prayer and of belongingness in a family (Catholic family).

Be more circumspect; count our blessings; stand up for our Faith.

1. Protect and strengthen the family through support for married couples, parenting courses, homilies, marriage preparation course for people getting married. 2. Encourage more youths to attend Church and through evangelisation, teaching them to pray and developing friendships within the community. 3. Educate and encourage traditional Catholic practices such as novenas, rosary crusades, Eucharistic hour. 4. Better support for priests—in terms of the workload, preparing relevant homilies that relate to current issues and send a positive uplifting message about our faith, support to avoid temptations. 5. Preserve the privacy of confession.

To deepen our faith. To have a strong foundation of the catechism of our faith that every child and adult know by heart. To develop a rich prayer life in each one of us. Build a wonderful relationship with God by frequenting the sacraments and the Church visits. Australia not just needs strong athletes or brilliant minds in different fields of work but people who are athletes and workers from different fields, school children, university students, old people—who have a very strong faith, who prays a lot and practices faith.

When I think of what the Lord is asking of our Church in Australia I think of the following scripture passage: Ephesians 3:17-19: "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." I believe God is asking us first and foremost to get to know and dwell in His eternal love by spending time with Him especially in the sacraments and in adoration. From this deep prayer life combined with a good formation/education about the Lord and His Church, can true mission flow in the form of evangelism on one hand and service to the poor on the other hand. I am convinced that a renewal in the Church will only be possible through a powerful conversion of our hearts, by turning back to the Lord and offering Him our lives and hearts anew, by allowing His Holy Spirit to cleanse, teach and mould us. We can only change the Church (and so the world) by praying. I believe we need more and deeper formation, especially for our young people. They are the future of the Church, we have to invest in them. There is a richness in our faith and in our Church that is almost unending to grasp and we need more opportunities to explain, study and understand. We need to have Church history, encyclicals, lives of saints, catechism... brought back as a vital part of Catholic formation. We cannot underestimate our young people, they are in search of the Truth, we need to offer it to them. "Not only would I say the family

is important for the evangelisation of the world. The family is important and it is necessary for the survival of the world” (Pope Francis). Today there is no recognition for the family anymore, more so our families and family values are under constant attack. Building a beautiful family and family life is counter cultural. I strongly believe the Church has to stand up for our families: support and strengthen them and fight for their rights and their place in society. The Church has to be a beacon where families, parents and children, can feel safe and encouraged. I think that in this society that is very much individualistic and materialistic, parishes have to be examples of community life, of family almost where people pray together, serve together, learn together, walk together, encourage one another, help one another grow, reach out to the needy together. People outside of the parish life should be amazed and be able to recognize the love they see among the parishioners. We need to build the courage to open up our hearts to the Lord, be vulnerable in front of one another and to radically follow Christ every day. Only so, can we be the Light in the world that we are called to be.

At this point in time I believe Jesus is calling us to come back to the roots of our Catholic tradition. The second Vatican Council brought in a fresh new wave of grace for the new evangelisation, which I believe has brought forth many fruits, and brought on a revived sense of the faith within those who have been touched by Christ. This new wave of grace has equipped the religious and lay Catholic Community to proclaim the Gospel with more confidence and courage to combat the pernicious ideologies of the modern age such as consumerism and secularism to name a few. However I truly feel that in the process of moving in this tide, we have forgotten some of the truly old but beautiful traditions of the Faith. Such things that I believe that we need to come back to are familiarity of the Latin Mass and Latin language, a promotion of adoration/ benediction and familiarity with the old chants, which are so beautiful when arranged in a modern setting. This is what I believe is missing. When I was exposed to these traditions for the first time as a young adult, I felt the Holy Spirit evoke a new love for Christ and the Church. It sparked a longing to know more, to learn more and to be a better Christian.

The only way I can know God's mind is through my own experience, my own conscience and through sharing my thoughts with others attempting to discern what God is asking of us in Australia at this time. This has led me to believe that God wants us to strive so that, on his return, Jesus does not despair. For the Catholic Church to achieve this it needs to be always mindful to provide the means for people to come to God and support each other throughout life's journey. While the life and teachings of Jesus transcend time and place he still spoke and acted in ways that were relevant to his time and place on Earth. Without altering the message of Jesus in any way, for the Catholic Church to succeed in showing His way in Australia today it needs to speak and act in ways that are relevant to this time and to this place. Relevance in Australia at this time requires the Church to widen its talent pool of leaders to all Catholics with the desire, personal qualities and capability to lead an organisation based on the teachings and example of Jesus. This talent pool includes married and single men and women of various sexual orientations.

I think God is asking for us to hold on to our traditions and respect history and the value of our faith.

God is asking us as Catholics in Australia to keep faithful to the teachings, doctrines and practices of the Holy Church. To do this we need to first know what it is we believe and follow but more importantly, why we believe and follow it. From our experiences we have witnessed many people being turned off because they only think of Catholicism as ‘no to this’ and ‘don’t do that’ or ‘that’s a sin’; both from what they hear, read or experience. We believe there needs to be more effort to help people understand the purpose and benefits of what we teach—to understand the WHY of things, because many people do not think deeper about the reasons and this is what needs to be cultivated to help people have their own conversions—regardless of whether they are already Catholic or not. There are many facets within Australian Catholic life that need to be addressed to help people not only come to understand their faith more, but to also grow in their love of our religion and most importantly, of God. Continued in attachment.

More opportunity and emphasis for confession. There should always be 30 minutes of available confession before and/or after Mass (at the very least, Sunday Masses and obligatory Masses). I’m

sure there are some priests are so busy that they cannot do so, but most priests (and I know quite a few), have time, if they will it, to carry out this important sacrament. I can imagine there are thousands, maybe millions of Catholics that are taking communion in the state of mortal sin, knowingly or unknowingly. I believe God is asking Australia at this time, especially in an era of rampant sin (pornography, abortion, gay marriage, etc.), there needs to be a Mass cleansing of the people of this land, and we should start with more confession. I also think God is asking for the Church to be more involved in our Catholic schools, in the formation and education of our whole Catholic school system. Kids these days have no formation, and first and foremost, it starts in the family, but our education system is the secondary face for our children to flourish as a disciple of God.

I believe God is asking the Church to form its faithful well. Today the majority of Catholics attend Mass once a week, if that. Many lack a prayer and sacramental life, and do not know basics of Catholic teaching or sacred scripture. We cannot give what we don't have, so how does a Church with so few fervent members pass on the faith and attract others? The Church is ill, and the remedy is a resurgence of deep formation of its members from newly baptised children all the way to our elderly.

Catholic families need help and support. Society and culture currently make it so difficult to raise a strong Catholic family. The Church needs to provide family/marital/parenting formation to Catholic couples from pre-marriage all the way through to raising young children, adolescents and beyond. Formation for married couples shouldn't just be spiritual, it needs to help with day-to-day challenges as well as character formation in their children.

To end clericalism. End child abuse. To provide a proper defence of those falsely accused of abuse (stop hiding because of our history and point to proper criminology data). Stand properly with the poor.

To serve him and others, Love always and grow in love with others. Pray more. Accept others and change in society according to the word of God. Live out the gospel values. Elaborate on Christian values. Increased discussions on bigger issues, e.g. Poverty, abortion. To know the importance of reciting the rosary. The ability to discuss our beliefs with everyone. Practice what we preach and believe, non-hypocritical. Celebrate the greater things in life. Learn to love yourself and others. Be appreciative of the gifts God gave each of us. Follow our heart and God's will. Include and accept all cultures within our community. Remember that God loves us unconditionally. Take care of our environment. Take care of our churches around Australia. Remember we are children of God. Take reverence seriously. Full awareness of the Eucharist presence. Acknowledge repercussions on changes in doctrine and God's law. Importance of Catholic sacraments.

God is asking us here in Australia: To be educated so we can defend our faith. To promote family and love for children. To teach children the Joy of Christ. To bring families closer to God. To reach out to the elderly. To gain access to the teaching of the Church. To uphold family values according to God. To respond to the youths involved in domestic violence and drugs. To evangelise children and families. To teach young couples the sacrament of marriage. To teach the love and grace of Christ to society. To be the face of humility like Christ. To stand firm in our faith and pray for our community and the Church. To involve families in church not just the Mass. To be able to teach non-Catholics the great things about our Church. To be strong and living Catholics rather than hidden Catholics. To be involved more in youths ministries. To prove God's existence to non-believers through religious education.

I think God is asking us in this time in Australia, to really focus on what our children are being taught in our schools. Because they are the future in our Church for decades to come. We can teach them the catechism more often, maybe start the day with school Mass, and all what the Church teaches. I can strongly ask please don't teach them safe school material like LGBTI as it is garbage to teach our young children these topics. I guess we can start with that.

Perhaps what God is asking of the Church in Australia is no different to what He has asked of His people throughout history; to offer up prayer and fasting, to turn to Him through love and an earnest desire for a deeper relationship with Him. The Catholic Church in Australia, and indeed throughout the world, needs to focus on formation. It is essential for all Catholics to be properly formed and catechised in their faith. How are Catholics expected to hold onto the faith and evangelise others when they themselves are not properly catechised and have little understanding of the Catholic faith? Formation is key. Proper Catholic catechesis should be compulsory in all Catholic secondary schools and all Catholics, both old and young, should have opportunities in their parishes for proper formation in the faith. This might include weekly catechesis sessions, Bible studies using sources such as Scott Hahn or Jeff Cavins, and a greater focus on learning apologetics for all Catholics. The Catholic Church should erase the stigma of 'Catholics not knowing the Bible' unlike our Protestant brothers and sisters, and we should make available more Bible courses and Catholics should be encouraged to know scripture. Through this proper formation in the Catholic faith, a greater understanding of the beautiful mystery of the Mass and the liturgy will be grasped. Through formation, Catholics will truly come to have a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Mass and a deeper love and reverence for this sacrament will ensue. Beauty, one of the most attractive transcendentals to any non-Christian, should be returned to the liturgy. A deeper reverence and respect for the liturgy should be paramount among Catholics, and this will only flow from a proper formation and deeper understanding of the sacrament. Every parish Mass and church should reflect the beauty of God; whether by more traditional music, a deeper reverence (including silence before and after Mass), and an understanding from the congregation of what is taking place. Our church buildings should also reflect the beauty of God by offering Him the praise and glory through beautiful architecture, and consequently transcending the people towards God. In a culture that is growing more devoid of beauty, let the Catholic Church arise as a beacon of light, a beacon of beauty, allowing this transcendental to transform the hearts of men and women towards Beauty Himself. The Church in Australia should also focus on evangelisation. Strong moral leaders must rise as examples. If each Catholic was properly formed in their faith and were able to develop a personal relationship with Christ, then more Catholics would be passionate for evangelising. Following their formation, there needs to be in the Church a greater focus on evangelisation. But such a passion for evangelisation will only be born out of a love for the faith, which in turn may be born from proper formation.

God doesn't change, therefore the Church shouldn't change, go back to what has worked when we used to have a lot of vocations. Priests need to be more devoted to the Blessed sacrament and lead the way for the laity and there needs to be no talking in the Church so people can pray. And also greater devotion to Our Lady such as every parish praying the Rosary before or after Mass.

To emphasise a nation-wide period of penance and spiritual and doctrinal reform, a return to the wisdom and purity of heart of Christ as received through the early Church fathers. I think that the Holy Spirit is calling Christ's Church to a long Lent wherein our people individually and together as an institution clarify the direction of our hearts on whether we want to please as many people as possible or whether we want to please the one thing necessary—the God-man Jesus Christ. We need something around which to gather and rebuild our concrete unity and if the Jesus Christ displayed in the Gospels is not that criteria around which we unite in our devotion and love, then Nothing is capable of uniting all Catholics, we may as well all schism off into our own preferred groups. And if we do not unite around Jesus and wanting to please Him, then God cannot send us His grace, and the dead branches of our mistakes cannot be pruned and new life cannot spring up from where life has petered and died.

Sanctification of the Church. For Australia to turn from its sins and follow religious values. Bring back Christianity to Australia. People need to be continually re-educated in the Faith and its dogmas they learn it at school then forget. Pre and post marriage formation to stop the increase in divorce rates. Have mentor couples for the newly wed couples or for couples in crisis. Educate children at high school about communication in marriage and parenting skills. Bring back Catholic cultures and

processions—home visits, Holy Water and incensing for new homes. All priests to receive continued formation with regular assessments and spiritual direction. Priests need standardise answers to religious questions and confessions for example each priest has a different opinion if you should receive JESUS in Holy Communion more than once per day. Priest need short to the point homilies... no use talking for half an hour with no catch points. Formation programs for children, teens and youths/young adults. Have a registry for spiritual directors. More pastoral works by the priest instead of continued concerns for managing finances... Even the Apostles in the Bible had other disciples look after church matters while the Apostles attended more important matters.

God is asking young people to take more responsibility in leading the Church in their parishes, families and social spheres. E.g.: creating a welcoming environment for migrant families through projects like the DREAM Refugee Project. Young people can form more genuine friendships with non-Catholics to accompany them in their search for the Truth rather than sticking to Catholic circles of friends where they feel comfortable and secure. We need to understand and respect people from all religious denominations if we are to enter into fruitful dialogue with them about the meaning of life. Young people need to learn how to respond articulately and positively to difficult questions about Catholic teaching, shedding light, not heat and leading by example and love. We know that there is a shortage of priests in Australia and we are praying for more Holy priests who can give us regular spiritual direction and the sacrament of Confession, but we think it would help to have a team of priests in every parish of different ages with different gifts to offer the Community. It is important for the youths to relate positively with older members of the community, learning from one another. Organising and spreading more doctrinally sound and practical children's liturgy will help Catholics from a young age discover the beauty of their Faith. E.g.: Good Shepherd. Religion teachers need more regular professional development to help them grow as Catholics and prepare classes for their students that are an overflow of their personal relationship with God. It makes a big difference for students to see their teacher praying and really mean it. Teachers who do not lead by example risk leading young and impressionable students along the wrong path or even rejecting their Faith altogether. To address the root problem, an investigation into secondary and tertiary education needs to be conducted. Young people need to learn to be critical thinkers and not take public opinion at face value. A lot of young people today care too much what other people think and lack interior freedom. People are turning away from their faith and what they believe because they 'have no time for it.' They are influenced by social media and focused on materialistic things. They need to foster a strong sense of justice in a relativistic world where laws do not always equate to what is morally correct. Young Catholics today need courage to go against the grain. God is asking us to stay strong in our faith despite the rising resentment of Catholics in our society. He asks us to be open-minded and respectful of other people's beliefs and opinions, to master the ability to empathise and understand them whilst fostering hope in God's plan and Faith in His teaching. It is important that we trust God and pray for understanding and strength in trial. He asks that with the love and compassion that he instils in us, we are able to reflect and share with other members of our community and country.

Protect and strengthen the family through support for married couples, parenting courses, homilies, marriage preparation course for people getting married

Stop abuse of people by people in power, clergy and lay people alike. As Christians, we are called to humility and not power. Abuse in all forms, physical, verbal, psychological and sexual should be stopped. By continuing to expose those who are abusive, providing training/educating those who are pre-dispose to abuse. By continuing to support initiatives like WWCC, Independent Education Union. By continuing to support and praying for our priests and people in power. Continuing to evangelise, encouraging everyone to start/nurture our personal relationship with Jesus, continue praying and be Jesus' witness.

FAITH IN ACTION: Accept others as they are despite of their differences. Stand up for the poor needy and disadvantaged. Be inclusive just fair. Be like JESUS, welcoming, loving, forgiving. Truly live our

faith and His teachings. To be faithful true. Go back to basics; back in Jesus' days when life was less complicated. Pass on Catholic faith to future generation.

We are custodians of our world. Particularly everything in nature which relies on us to take action to support its existence, "God's gift to us". Also applies to climate change. We have a responsibility to do our best to preserve our unique natural world. Too often, economics/money is our no. 1 consideration. Every action leads to a reaction.

HUMANITARIANISM: To be examples of love, compassion and forgiveness. Identify and manage all incidents of abuse- past and present. Forgive others especially those who have wronged us. Men need to be educated within Catholicism. We need to have more stringent screening process of our future priests. Our clergy needs support.

1. Protect and strengthen the family through support for married couples, parenting courses, homilies, marriage preparation course for people getting married. 2. Encourage more youths to attend church and through evangelisation, teaching them to pray and developing friendships within the community. 3. Educate and encourage traditional Catholic practices such as novenas, rosary crusades, Eucharistic hour. 4. Better support for priests—in terms of the workload, preparing relevant homilies that relate to current issues and send a positive uplifting message about our faith, support to avoid temptations. 5. Preserve the privacy of confession.

Schools need to be prepared to defect from federal/state funding especially with more radical teaching coming through. Schools need to hire practicing Catholics especially as RE teachers. Parishes suffer from being so large that they don't actually form a community—each parish should look to incorporating small groups for everyone in the parish. Priests need to be amongst the community life and not hiding in the presbytery. Restore the St Michael Prayer to the end of Mass. Music ministry needs to be done with the idea of beauty in mind, not belligerent inclusivity. Formation needs to be developed and offered for people in all stages of life. More availability of spiritual direction for everyone. People should need to properly participate in the Catholic life to be able to be in Catholic schools and other programs. Availability of skills programs for both Gregorian chant and more band focused music ministry. Subsidiarity should be applied to the Church's charitable programs, although we can give money to an organisation it is so important to spend time doing charity—CatholicCare shouldn't be running a soup kitchen in place of a parish. Confession needs to be more readily available, at least before each Mass.

In my opinion, God is asking of Australia to particularly observe daily prayer (especially the Holy Rosary) and regular attendance of Mass, especially outside of Sunday Mass and Days of Obligation. More Church devotion e.g. Adoration of the Blessed sacrament, Novena and Benediction. More involvement in groups that help spread the Word of God or the Holy Gospel e.g. the Legion of Mary, volunteering as a catechist. Reaching those of lukewarm faith, lapsed Christians or those who do not know our Lord through home visitation, evangelisation or even regular personal communication.

To answer the question on "what do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time", my answer will be to have faith, courage and be united. However, these words are easier said than done. In a time where it is becoming more and more difficult to talk about our faith and encourage others within the Church and others outside, we as Christians cannot just be idle and/or just wait for things to improve or just leave it to the clergy and laity. Allow me to briefly share my spiritual journey and how I have made that commitment to serve God together with my wife. It all started when a friend of mine whom my mum would call as a bad influence when we were young invited me and wife to attend a Christian community seminar for couples. Many have tried before inviting me to attend church seminars including my wife but I was not interested at all. For me, going to Mass on a Sunday is enough to fulfil my obligation as a Catholic Christian. For some reason I was curious with what had happened to my friend, that I said yes. It was like my friend was Philip and I was Nathaniel and was asked to come and see. That was 27 years ago and my life had a complete turnaround since then and became a born again. Presently, I am active member still of that same (family oriented)

community and actively serving the Church either thru the community or be involved in various church activities in our parish. We share the good news thru evangelizing others, bringing people to community and support community programs for the needy and disadvantage. Reason why I shared this is because the community has played a vital role in my spiritual journey. It is God's gift to me and my family. Being in a community of followers of Christ, we support and care for one another, attend regular pastoral teachings and serve in various outreach or life in the spirit programs not just for couples but for youths, singles and widows. We enjoy one another in the community and enrich our faith thru fellowship. It is thru communities like ours that has nurtured our faith, gave us the courage and be united in the very work of Christ. If not for the community, I would not experience the joy of serving Christ in the midst of the problems we regularly encounter at home, work and in the society. My hope in this Plenary Council is to look what Catholic communities can do to the Church especially in these difficult times. My hope that the Church will encourage more into the life of the Church. If possible, for bishops and parish priest to look into the different gifts that each community can bring and encourage and promote it to the parishioners. Priest and bishop should not see communities as competition or have the misconception that their parishioners will be taken from them but instead to see it as an instrument. For communities to integrate more and more into the Church life and have a strong collaboration and presence with the support of the priest and bishops. May God bless us all.

A. How we can defend and fight for our faith. \* Abortion becomes a common act/solution now. \* Within families divided issue about gay marriage. \* Different family, parent with their gay children. \* Against our faith but within the family, young adult gives their voice in their opinion. \* Politicians stand to the voice of popularity to win votes. \* Practicing the Catholic Faith means be more vigilant to voice out the issues. \* Let the Youths speak, listen to their needs and guide them in the right path. B. Australia need a strong Leaders to have firm convictions. \* Gay marriage—unity on addressing the issue. \* Christians need to stand and defend our faith and belief. \* To strengthen the followers. \* We need a strong leaders. \* People needs a Catholic leaders to lead and to follow the true faith as a Catholic. \* To stand and to fight for their faith. C. Evangelising Christians and Non-Christians. \* Develop Charismatic speakers to uplift the laity, train in giving talks to deliver the message well. \* Speakers to defend faith and to spread the word of God to the people. \* This has been proven in many communities within the Church. The priest serves as spiritual directors. \* In all Charismatic communities, the Holy Mass and Liturgy become the strong foundation of their faith. D. To be more prayerful. \* Need to introduce the Catholic Faith and the life of our Saints to others. \* Study the Bible and reveal the message of the scriptures to the lives of God's people.

I believe that God is asking us to stay faithful to the teachings and traditions of the Church as a means to encounter the person of Jesus Christ while also keeping the Virtue of Charity as the foundation of their actions. Furthermore, I believe that in this times of hardship, God is calling us deeper into his most Sacred Heart within the Eucharist and hence we need better formation in regards to the Church being Eucharistic centred and also being Marian.

Main themes proposed during listening sessions, by email and via feedback forms: 1. Increased access to Masses / frequent confession / adoration / the Church. • For working people, considering the evolving nature (and times and locations) of work. • Coordinated across deaneries to maximise opportunities for attendance. • Supporting disabled (Hearing, sight, mobility impaired, etc.), diverse language backgrounds and families with children / babies. • For children and youths, particularly through schooling and universities. Every Catholic School in Australia to have a chapel or immediate geographical access to an open Catholic Church, paired with a requirement that attending children throughout their schooling be strongly encouraged / enabled to attend weekly Masses. • Single sex, Catholic residential colleges with Chapels, on campus at each major university. • Churches open as much as possible (E.g. where security an issue—St [ - ]'s [ - ]). 2. Promotion of the faith / formation / evangelisation / outreach. • Each parish resourced to appoint paid person (extra to the parish priest) to coordinate evangelisation and outreach within diocese, under direction of the Hierarchy. • Prioritising stronger catechesis / religious education / formation / sacramental programs, by

competent persons, in line with orthodox teachings, to expand the number, knowledge and virtues, of the faithful, reverence for and love of the faith and the Eucharist. Good e.g. the PARED schools re: families and children, producing strong, faith filled, Mass attending individuals, strong families, contributing communities, and many vocations. 3. Increased support for married couples / families:

- Prioritising broad availability of strongly structured, consistently applied marriage and parenting preparation courses following Church teaching, by well trained and competent presenters, with ongoing support, education and assistance throughout family life—For ideas: Fr [ - ] (MSC [ - ]) and Family Enrichment Australia.
- Strongly advocate / promote Church teachings: sex, sexuality, NFP, marriage, the gift of children and duties of parents to educate children.

4. Priests:

- Stronger formation processes and support during discernment (and through vocations) to attract appropriate candidates, whilst considering / managing risks.
- Empower as influencers / authorised decision makers for CEO schools within their diocese, mainly to facilitate promotion of the faith / formation / evangelisation / outreach and support for married couples and families (see above).
- Better training across the priesthood:
  - o Sermonising—‘priest masters’.
  - o Strong communities.
  - o School guidance and leadership.
  - o Facilitate outreach / evangelisation.
  - o Project management.
  - o Financial management.
  - o PR and social media.
  - o Languages.
  - o Mental health support.

5. Catholic Services Develop, implement and market coordinated, centralised information bank / hub for all Catholic services and organisations.

Devotion to him. We need an increase in prayer and particularly in Eucharistic Adoration. Our bishops and clergy must be united and willing to stand for the truth of the Gospels. This is true of the entire Australian Church, but her leaders must be a beacon of light and clarity on issues of faith and morals. The Australian Church must keep up with the times if it is to survive. It must listen to its young people. I am a youth minister and I see it in my work every day. Our young people are thirsting for so much more than this world can offer them—and they need to be spoken to where they are.

I think God is showing us that there are people desperate to clean the slate and start anew in the Catholic Church after their marriages fell apart yet they’re finding it very difficult to get the acceptance needed and clearance required to marry in the Catholic Church. Would God turn away people who have learned from their past mistakes and experiences, and refuse them the chance to fulfil their calling as a married person? God is asking us why we make it so difficult for people who haven’t lived perfect lives to be completely welcome in the Church. Why is the Church turning people away merely because their previous spouse wanted a divorce and they’re now seeking matrimony with another person, and God’s blessings of the new marriage?

To return to the authentic Catholicism of regular prayer, Holy Mass, sacraments, repentance, the rosary. To stand up for and strengthen the messages of Christ and His Church especially with regard to marriage and sexuality. To preach the gospel in accordance with 2000 years of Catholic tradition. To build His Church on earth and enlighten the world with Christ's truth.

"Turn to me now, while there is time. Give your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping and mourning." Joel 2:12. I think that God is asking of us—religious and lay people alike—to wake from our slumber and conduct an urgent spiritual renewal of the Catholic Church in Australia, to stop her speedily drifting away to become irrelevant and downcast in these so-called enlightened times. This trend is much to the dismay of her faithful followers who wish to ‘Keep the Faith’ no matter what the situation! The faith teachings and practices must be renewed if the Catholic Church in Australia is once again to be strong, holy, relevant and vibrant in the manner she has been in decades gone by. Renewing or reconnecting the Church with her true spirit and identity will require much needed changes in all facets of the Church’s operations and practices, and by extension, ensuring that faith instruction carried out in Catholic schools and colleges across all States and Territories in Australia is traditional, authentic, reliable and proper. For it is in the schools that children and teenagers learn and nurture their faith that hopefully complements whatever faith beliefs and practices, if any, are taught and encouraged in the home. That is where our faith journey begins. We must not be spiritual blind to what happening in our Church and put in place urgent and necessary changes.

There is a need for standardisation of the operation of parishes. I have visited various parishes in NSW and interstate and notice variances in culture, method, preparation and delivery of various sacraments and other services (including Mass). At Holy Spirit parish, we have half the congregation stand while the other half-kneel during the Eucharistic prayer. Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharistic not wearing appropriate clothing for the distribution of communion. Bring back reverence to the Eucharist celebration, this includes how people dress, act and speak, especially those who serve at the altar. Reverence in the receiving of Holy Communion and punctuality when attending Mass especially those who serve in various ministries. A better commitment and deeper preparation before receiving some sacraments. A strict national approach on how parishes are run. A best practice approach should be implemented. A more pleasant, welcoming and inclusive environment at churches. There is an urgent need for ordained Deacons/ priests to give homilies/sermons that also provide proper instruction and guidance in the beliefs, teachings and proclaimed doctrines of the Catholic Church.

I think God is asking of us in Australia to change the way that we welcome and treat LGBTQ+ people and to take action on protecting our common home. I have already expressed my views in this regard in a group submission, but I truly think that there are so many sexuality-diverse Catholics doing amazing work in the Church, all the while hiding their sexuality—perhaps with shame. I think God is asking of us to remove the shame and stigma of what is essentially, a sexual orientation which has not been chosen. And even to take a step further and extend this understanding to the ways that those individuals express their genuine love, i.e., romantically and sexually. I know that this is a gigantic change, but I think that that is what God is asking of us—to tear down the barriers that divide us, in accordance with being authentically Catholic and disciples of Jesus, as flawed as we are.

God is calling us into an ever greater vision through our constant prayer. It is through this prayer we will find answers. My complete submission will be given as an attached document.

- Adult faith formation.
- Collaboration between young and old people in participating and the planning ahead for the mission of the Church. E.g. encouraging young people to join parish councils.
- Authentic witnesses to the faith and Catholic teachings. Preach and live the Gospels. Remind ourselves of whose we are, and what are represent.
- A greater focus and encouragement on vocational discernment and providing resources for this, particularly for more priests for parishes without one or limited availabilities.
- Community outreach outside Church boundaries and within/for secular society. Christians are passionate about social justice, and particularly the young people. If parishes can arrange such projects for their communities, this may encourage more of their parishioners to get involved. E.g. visiting the elderly in nursing homes (or parishioners who are now bed-ridden or can't make it to church anymore), soup kitchens, breakdown silo communities and rather build on each other's strengths.
- Do not water-down Church teachings.
- Let young people join in the liturgical ministries, and trust them with it.
- Perhaps not taking in everyone who enquires about sacraments of Initiation because of numbers, but rather find out more as to why families are bringing their children, or ensure that they understand what they're doing.
- Leaders who genuinely serve to bring people closer to Christ, and not themselves.

I think we need more teaching of Catholic doctrine. There are a lot of Catholics who are unaware of the Church's teachings (and the reasons for these teachings) on a range of issues, such as: why weekly Sunday Mass is necessary, why abortion and contraception are wrong, the beauty and necessity of Catholic marriage, the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the sacraments. In our parish, we have excellent Communion and Confirmation sacramental programs (the confirmation program is called Decision Point by DynamicCatholic.com) which were very informative, clear, thorough and helpful for both the children and their parents, and would be beneficial if more parishes utilised these resources. There needs to be a much more thorough

Catechism program taught in the Catholic schools, utilising the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Bible and more of the Church's teachings, as there are many students who are not learning enough about the richness of the Catholic faith.

I think it would be helpful if the Mass and confession were available more frequently, and neighbouring parishes coordinated to enable a wider range of Mass times, such as weekday early morning or evening Masses for people who are working.

Please read all relevant information. Thessalonians 2:11-12 "And therefore God sends them a power to delude people so that they believe what is false, and so that those who do not believe the truth and take pleasure in wickedness may all be condemned." According to Daniel Estulan, who is regarded as a world expert on the Bilderberg Group which was founded by Prince Bernard of the Netherlands in 1954, that every MSN outlet in the world is either owned or directly controlled by members of this group. When a group of the world's most powerful elite meet every year, news of it is totally absent in the MSN. Members and attendees are Media owners, Royals, statesmen, bankers, billionaires. This group has been described as a think tank for the Globalist movement whose goal is to establish a One World Government and according to Alexander Dugan, a political expert and advisor to one of the world's most powerful leaders, the Globalist movement has a three-part strategy—1. To undermine your Religious identity. 2. To undermine your National identity. 3. To undermine your gender identity. This gained momentum in 1994 when the EU Parliament (removal of crucifixes) began a wide spread media campaign to normalize Homosexuality, etc. and governments like the Australian Gov. began to strip normal people of their God ordained dignified gender titles in all government documents. Prior to his death David Rockefeller played a vital role in the Bilderberg Group he also established the CFR or Council of Foreign Relations 1921. The CFR sends a bulletin, at 4:00 am every day, to all MSN outlets advising them how to interpret the news and which stories to focus on. It is quite obvious that the main news channels in Australia comply with their masters as Australian journalists have been reduced to courier boys and girls for these masters who control anyone in power and can destroy their reputation with just a few nasty spun stories. Just ask poor old Cardinal Pell about that one (e.g. Undermine your religious identity) "strike the Shepherd and the flock will scatter." You've probably heard Andrew Bolt's view on the subject at least one decent Journalist. President John F. Kennedy spoke of these secret societies in a historical speech in 1963 prior to his assassination " the enemy is no longer from without but from within!" President George Bush Senior, "We are about to enter a New World Order!" George Soros (1995) "That a New World Order will be established but it will be preceded by a period of great disorder!" It is a form of Marxism where a powerful elite class dominate the Masses. Please learn the three strategies above by heart and explain them to your flock that they may not be deceived. Catholics in Australia are over exposed to the secular media which affects their spiritual formation and many are misled some other nations have their own Christian media outlets but in Australia your sheep are in grave danger this issue must be addressed.

God is asking us to remain steadfast in our Faith, a gift he freely gave us that must be nurtured. He wants us to cultivate it, nourish it for it to flourish in our families and on to the next generation. We are made of body and soul. If we take care of our body by making sure we don't get sick, the more we should take care of our soul by feeding it, nourishing it with spiritual food. We are too busy with our everyday activities, trying to catch up with the Jones' or by engaging our children to activities beyond what they can do—private tutoring (Maths, English, etc.), sports lessons (tennis, soccer, etc.), music lessons (piano, guitar, saxophone) to name a few. We are too busy that we forget to pause, reflect and pray. God wants more families to pray, but it has to start from home. He wants us to teach our children the basic prayers and to lead by example. But we must be educated on Christian Doctrine. We should make an effort to attend doctrinal talks organized by the parishes or Parenting talks organized by schools. We need these inputs to be more effective in educating our children within our daily family activities.

He is asking us to follow the Gospel in its fullness. He is asking the Church to preach it in its fullness. Her institutions to adhere to it without compromise and for the faithful to live it without compromise.

I feel that God is asking us to be faithful in a time of diversity and fear. He wants us to be faithful to Him and in the Eucharist. The Church is made up of humans. God wants us to run our lives in his likeness, not to put our trust in another human being, but in Him.

I think He is asking us to listen without compromising the truth. Too often, sides aren't listening to one another but once they do, agreement isn't the most important thing but rather the capacity to understand and respect why there is difference of understanding and opinion and how we can best continue to communicate. There will always be disagreement and at a certain, we will have to accept that we have finally reached the basics and we are all fighting for what is right.

Listen to the voices of people who are hurting, traumatised, lost seeking meaning in their lives. Treat them with humility, dignity, compassion, loving them unconditionally, as Jesus loves them, accompany them in their situations, working with them to restore healing, wholeness, reconciliation, acknowledge their pain and repent of our wrong doings, we are all guilty, the sins of a few are on us all. Let us show them the face of God by our words, actions and sharing The Gospel of Hope. Treat the Catholics that do come to Church like thinking adults who want to be challenged by the Gospel, not fed on pious thoughts. Change Canon Law which prevents women from preaching. Encourage women to give reflections on the readings at Mass. Open priestly Ordination to married men (in addition to Anglicans who became Catholics) married women and women in religious orders. Ordain Women Deacons. Embrace and welcome divorced Catholics who seek another chance at married life and desire to marry in the Catholic Church, quicken the annulment process, make it affordable, do not condemn them to live in relationships outside marriage or push them out of the Catholic Church to another Church. Help them to be reconciled to God, Church and man. Return to the essential work of preaching the Gospel, as Catholics we concentrate largely on the sacraments than on study of the scriptures. The sacramental Church can only be sustained by the Word of God. Encourage Bible Study for every baptised Catholic, equip them with the word of God which will bring the sacraments alive. Every disciple of God needs to be a disciple maker, we want to be challenged by the Gospel, supported by powerful spiritual prayers, encouraging one another in small groups where the gospel is made relevant to everyday living. We want continuing conversion of self and others, we want Mass to be a prayerful celebration, not a chore for the priest. Our priests need ongoing conversion. We need to know how to do Spiritual Warfare, St Paul says we are not fighting against flesh and blood, we need to learn to recognise the real enemy. The Church can only go forward with and through the work of The Holy Spirit, which involves the whole Church, not just the ordained. Jesus told His disciples to wait till The Holy Spirit Comes; and when The Holy Spirit Came the Church was on Fire. We need to cry out to God to send a fresh outpouring of The Holy Spirit on the Church, to release His sanctification gifts of Isaiah 11:2 and His manifestation gifts of service as in 1 Cor 12. We need to be like the early Church where signs, wonders, hospitality, common good were held. And when persecuted for being a follower of Jesus Christ, let us turn our eyes and surrender our hearts to God and ask for His grace in the trials so our reward may be as his word in (Mt 5:11).

Please note, I'm submitting a second submission and hope you will still consider it. We are facing many challenges in our Church here and in the world and He needs us to step up. But we also need to do this, fully aware of the mindsets we will be facing, perspectives and beliefs that are just as deeply rooted as our own. In the ongoing battle for the unborn, for example, we are faced with ideas, such as the notion of 'bodily autonomy' and 'reproductive freedom', that people believe are the absolute truth to their very core. What this means is that we really have to bring things down to the essentials. No shaming tactics that only cement their thinking that we are here to shame people into doing things our way, but focusing on the very fundamentals on which we actually disagree and then working from there. In this particular example—the notion that the life of a living human being, whether or not it was wanted or conceived under heinous circumstances, is of more value than reproductive freedom or bodily autonomy or vice versa. We waste so much time on

arguments that ultimately only lead each side to dig in their heels and stop listening to one another. We have to come at this knowing we are fighting for the right thing, while still remembering that others are just as convinced they are doing the same. It goes both ways and this also means that we must improve doctrinal education to ensure that Catholics understand the teachings in all their nuance, not just in the black and white terms so many people like to use to represent them. Considering the oftentimes confusing communication coming from the Vatican, and the already frantic din of the media, it is far too easy for people to misinterpret what the Church is teaching. We need to ensure that students who are now exposed to so much information have the genuine capacity to discern what is true from what is noise. We can't continue to fight for truth when we have no idea what it even is. The Church in Australia has to be a voice and a source of reason, education and understanding, especially now as suspicion about who we are and what we stand for is at its peak. I am certain we can do this, we just have to ensure we are able to listen and communicate while remaining steadfast and uncompromising about the truth of God's teachings. Easily said, I know, but that is why we call on the Holy Spirit to guide us and allow God to make us channels and that is how I know that we can do this.

A. CHURCH VIBRANCY and DYNAMISM. We need a Church that is vibrant or open to all people at all the times. Parishes should always be welcoming to church-goers, visitors and communities of different backgrounds. The churches and Catholic organisations should be able to adapt to the modern times and be able to make people comfortable, interested and engaged at all times. Our Church should be supportive of the organisations which are currently helping our in evangelising our Catholic faith. As an example, some parish priests would make organisations pay, sometimes a substantial amount, for a room that they requested to use for their group activities, meetings or evangelisation events. Some other priests or parish staff members make it difficult for organisations when they ask permission to use parish facilities. These happen even when the members of the community give their share of donations/tithes to the Church. These organisations are mostly non-profit and are volunteers to help the Church and thus, should have the full support of the parish priests in their efforts. There are also priests who are not open in allowing other Catholic communities in their activities because they are favouring other groups especially being biased on those ones that they have founded themselves. We need to bring back the previous worshippers. In general, we need to be more open to our brothers and sisters who have are no longer practicing the faith. a. Sometimes, the priest giving the homily or the homily itself is boring and repetitive. They should think of ways to make the homily vibrant and enticing to Churchgoers especially the young ones. b. More improvement on homily content and delivery is required. Priests should be able to draw the point and deliver the message clearly. Make it easier for people to understand and comprehend and also apply in modern times. c. Priests are getting old and are not vibrant anymore. d. Catholics are losing charisma and are very relaxed in evangelising. e. We should review and investigate why we are losing members. Extra Mass services for those people of different work and family commitments. We should think of ways to make the churchgoers not lose faith and stay in Church. Revive the Church especially to the younger generation as they are the ones who will keep our Church afloat. B. EDUCATION and EMPOWERMENT. We need to educate more people especially on the importance of the Mass and our Catholic ethos and principles. At these millennial times, the Catholic Church should be more present in social media and mainstream television. We should have our own Catholic channel and be able to voice out our own beliefs and practices and encourage other people to join us in our faith.

Stand strong in our faith and Church teaching. Do not be swayed by the whims of current trends and thoughts. Pray for all of those who are persecuted for their faith and who are struggling to stand firm.

God is asking us baptised Catholics to return to the purity of our Catholic faith—to know God, love God, serve God in this world and the next. He wants us to be educated anew in what the Catholic Church has taught consistently over 2000 years, to be encouraged and assisted to study the Bible, and to learn what the Catholic Catechism teaches. God is asking His priests to return to the true

mission of the Church—to save Australian souls, to assist us in getting to Heaven. God is not wanting His Church to be sidelined with politics, environment, cultural issues, etc. but to focus on teaching religious and moral truths. In light of appalling sad events in recent days, I prayerfully submit that God is asking us to call for restoration of judicial independence by the Catholic Church here in Australia, not submission to secular tribunals. God wants the Church to take back its moral authority, to reaffirm the moral law of the Church. There is a crisis of credibility, but this has brought about a hunger for truth. God is asking us ordinary Aussies to ask for sound doctrine to be readily available to be taught, and to see that lived out by those in authority. One topical application of this is teaching on homosexual behaviour and lifestyle. Australian Catholics are very confused. They want to know God's truth and God is raising up Aussies who are pleading for sound teaching backed up by evidential proof in their local parishes and beyond. God is asking us to make reparation for the sins against life, especially abortion. Prayer groups, published prayers that all can participate in. God is asking us to make our Catholic schools truly Catholic again. Educate teachers to know and love and abide by the Catholic faith and practice. God is asking us to return to the sacraments, especially Eucharist and reconciliation. Adoration Chapels to be set up, spending time before the Blessed sacrament actively encouraged. God wishes to see the Blessed Virgin Mary honoured in this country and Marian devotion especially the Rosary, revived. He wants us to invoke Our Lady Help of Christians, our patroness, often and in all churches. God is asking us to pray for all our clergy, seminarians, and religious daily.

As working men in the [ - ] Diocese, we are very lucky to have priests who provide the sacraments for us. One of the things that we as a group of parishioners discussed was better arrangement of Mass times. It could be so much better if there was a more co-ordinated approach to providing Mass in the parishes. Young people are known to prefer 5 or 6pm on Sundays (as they are out on Saturday night). Yet, very few parishes offer this. Another example is daily Mass. Many parishes provide daily Mass around 9am. If a person can't get to 9am, they have no other options. Where these parishes are 20 minutes' drive from a neighbouring parish, the times could be co-ordinated at a Deanery level to allow for people who have a long commute. Mass could be provided at 6am, 8am, 9am and 7pm for example. Only one day per parish would be 6am, so no one priest is not stuck with all the early mornings. Finally, the use of technology could be improved. Many parishes have fancy websites, but they do not update the information for the events of the week or changes to Mass times. Similarly, a number of parishes do not seem to post the most recent Bulletin to their websites, so if you were not at that Church on Sunday, there is no way of knowing what changes there are for the week.

God wants us to stay close to him, today society is moving away from God, we are destroying ourselves with our own two hands.

The strengths of our local community are: Lot of compassion, friendliness, welcoming attitude and a lot more participation by parishioners. Lay people involvement is a strength. Previous clergy encouraged more inclusiveness, acknowledge more and was more of the people. There is a lot of choice to join groups to feel more welcomed and part of the parish. Very mixed demographic. The ability for the parish to sustain and grow a successful [ - ] parish. The challenges of our local community: We need to reach out to the non-practicing in the parish, not enough welcomers are present. Parish not very welcoming to new parishioners. Connection with schools and Masses not strong and inclusive. The connection with real life and the sacraments is not present; they are not relevant. The meaning of prayer is not meaningful they understand the traditions. This generation want to do works of good not attend Mass. Mass could be more appropriate to the youths. A challenge is the lack of women in high positions in the Catholic Church. A challenge is the non-English speaking priest this is a barrier to kids being connected. The canon law is reluctant of an old Church it must be reflective of the 21st century needs and opinions. The Mass/Church pays too much attention to monetary donations.

Regain moral public authority in this country in the name of Jesus Christ. Abortion, euthanasia, sodomy, prostitution, and pornography MUST BE MADE ILLEGAL. Failure to address these abominations head on (yes and many of us Christians and Catholics alike will have to suffer to

achieve this) renders anything else you do as petty by comparison. The Holy Spirit will give us graces if we fight hard—like St Paul and the great saints and prophets did. Stop ignoring reality, the devil is real and destroying our nation and families right in front of our eyes. Our neighbours including Catholics unfortunately are our enemies who support and engage in the above abominations. Need leaders with spine who will excommunicate anyone supporting the above abominations and must be outspoken publicly against them, even if it means jail. Also need a Catholic radio and TV channel that tells it like it is, like EWTN in The USA. In fact, bring EWTN to Australia. Please heed these words seriously. The other day I saw a homosexual flag inside [ - ] Catholic Church, Satan has penetrated our sacred spaces , some of our priests and bishops are in Satan’s grip. This must end now—the Holy Spirit will give us the graces but we must be ready to receive them. For this, I pray fervently, hail Mary and Amen.

Jesus is coming soon, he is asking us in Australia and the Catholic Church to lead the way by uniting all Christian churches and Reigniting all the lukewarm Christians from all denominations (a division that has been one of Satan’s best works!!). Together we can work with the spirit for the conversion of souls throughout the world to achieve the balance needed on earth for Christ to come. This council has been called for this process to begin as it has to happen soon! There are many details that will go with this process that are known by me (I don’t know why but I do). This calling will give all Christian churches a common and united goal and a purpose to strive for the future of man and the conversion of souls. This is the most important job the Church has, he sees and knows the heart of each man and once the balance of converted hearts is reached, heaven will come to earth!! Nothing will be achieved without the genuine hearts of man working for Christ, Christianity is not about being religious or being in a certain denomination, it’s about having a personal relationship with Jesus and he allows us to love those who don’t so to allow them to be saved as well. This is what we must be striving for, not Just “Catholic” or “Protestant” stuff. The Catholic Church must lead the way for this to happen and it must happen now. God will listen if we ask to unite against the real enemy, we need to play our part and then he will work with us to achieve the promises of Christ!!

I think that Our Lord Jesus would allow priests to marry to gather in the people. I always thought we needed them in the community, as a family, and good examples of understandings of the mental traumas we all go through at some time in our lives. I feel it is unnatural for a loving man who offers up his life in service of others to be held back from their most meaningful insights and relationships that would speak volumes without words about the love of Father Universe. A HUB to gather together, outside of home, school, work, church to recover for good spirits within themselves, not just counselling and try to fix it measures but somewhere to trust, relax, with no alcohol or gambling, real games and activity for family fun. Somewhere to meet others and share life. A permanent space.

We need all leaders from all religious background to promote unity amongst the multicultural society we all live in. Tolerance.

To have a much more supportive and thoughtful process for intake of seminarians. It is generally a negative process to take young men either straight from school or in their late teens or very early 20s. If a young man wishes to enter the seminary and considers he has a vocation to the priesthood, then he should be encouraged to undertake a Theology degree at an appropriate university and take out a HECs debt if necessary, and be part of the real world. On completion of the Theology degree (3-4 years FT or PT study), if he is still interested in formation for priesthood, then a period of interviews, screening and discernment can begin. I would hope this would be open to married men and women as well. We need a radical change from the previous and current system of intake and formation of seminarians. I would hope that seminaries as such are no longer part of formation for priesthood as they just encourage institutionalisation and clericalism.

To proclaim loudly and clearly that clericalism and ecclesial structure in OUR Church is unchristian. Too few members of the hierarchy are true shepherds of OUR flock. Can you imagine the damage done by negligent, heartless people managers? Is the Plenary Council going to be a talk-fest,

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| <p>manipulated by the heartless people managers? Is the plenary council too late or is it the institution's last chance? We hope and pray.</p>  |
| <p>The great challenge facing the Church in Australia today is not the clerical abuse scandal, as bad as that is, it is the fact that 90% of the baptised have ceased listening and participating. We are failing in our prime, Jesus-given mission of "bringing the 'good news' to all people" (Mark 16:15). I believe God might be asking: what are you going to do about that—Jesus did not say just bring the 'good news' to some tiny minority who think they're the only ones who know my mind?</p>   |
| <p>I discern that God is calling His Church in Australia to a process of deeper formation. Attending a Catholic High School, I found that religion in senior years was more academic than spiritual, teaching me some facts about the Faith but not how to have a meaningful relationship with Christ. I saw many of my friends move away from the Church after high school, a common reason being that they "didn't have time to go to Mass", or they "didn't pray a lot"; they had not yet felt the immense love of Christ, nor understood the incredible sacrifice that takes place at the altar. There is a great difference between learning about Christianity and being a Christian. The majority of young, practising Catholics that I know were supported in their journeys primarily by their families. I think many parents don't take their own relationships with Christ seriously enough, depriving their children of models of authentic Christian life. If we could better engage parents in formation post-school or provide more authentically Catholic experiences to children, the Church in Australia would be greatly strengthened.</p>   |
| <p>We recognise the importance of the bishop/s to encourage and direct us (the sheep) to look to God and ask for a personal / intimate encounter with Christ in the word, the sacraments and the living Christian community. This also includes the need for Christians to be initiated into a mature faith through a rediscovery of their baptism.</p>   |
| <p>See attached responses from our group. This came from months of discussion, then more formally meeting to put forward our responses. To actively and significantly fund Life Line and mental health services for those damaged by our Church. This is beyond the issue of sexual abuse and its mismanagement.</p>  |
| <p>I think God is asking us to be a Church for all people not just a Church for those that tick all the right Catholic boxes. We need to be open and in touch with the world. We must engage and join in the mystery of our faith. Our Church needs renewal and the joy in Jesus Christ. We need to reach out to people or more importantly open our doors to those that feel our Church is not their Church those that have drifted elsewhere. We must build our Church anew with disciples of Jesus Christ. A Church for all and for the poor, the disabled, lonely, divorced. Our Church seems to hold on to the past but struggles to define its vision for the future. What is our Church's vision for the future? I hope it's a radical one.</p>  |
| <p><b>GOD IS ASKING US TO BE MORE LIKE THE APOSTLES!</b> Go out and spread the word to ALL people. Don't sit back and rely on the people coming to you (the Church). Spread the message to all. Be like the early missionaries. Sitting back is not working. Make our beautiful religion more appealing to younger people. But DON'T water down the religion to suit the times. Be true to its core. Remember the excitement of World Youth Day in Sydney. Use Social media. Put Catholic content on television for ALL to see. Perhaps schedule Catholic content programs on ACCTV. SPEND MONEY to do so! <b>THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!</b> Educate the population on the Truth! Schedule a yearly Church collection for the use to "spread the word" to all peoples of Australia. Similar to the collections we do for Caritas. Parents are concerned their children will leave the faith. I'm sure most people would be happy to contribute to a yearly collection to help pay for this URGENT Apostolate. Parish priests need to be better communicators. In their Homilies, they need to "connect" with their congregation to retain the young parishioners. It needs to be more than just saying the Mass. Be relevant, don't just explain what the Gospel is saying. Make the Gospel relevant to today. <b>SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS!</b> Apologise for some of the past, then move forward positively to the future. "Advertise/Market" yourself. There are people who do not know the Truth. They are ignorant, but it's NOT their fault. It's not their fault if they do not know! <b>MOVE QUICKLY.</b> Put yourself "out there"!</p> |

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| <p>MAKE YOURSELF HEARD! You are not going to please all, SO DON'T TRY! Keep our Church traditional. Let's place more importance on the music selection at Mass. Standards are pretty low. Music connects the soul! There needs to be better screening and selection around who can participate/organise the choir/music selection. Having lots of individual "groups" wanting to do their own thing at Mass, brings no cohesiveness. Bring back the traditional music. Music that we all know. PLEASE DON'T SING THE PRAYERS. The congregation will all SAY the prayers, but not all will sing them! Especially if it's not a very good choir. Please heed my comments. Wake up! Be humble! Use Pope Francis as your example! BE STRONG, BE PROUD! GET MOVING! We are the best country in the world. Let us be a shining light in the world! May God Bless Australia!</p>  |
| <p>At this time I believe God is calling the Church to develop a structure more closely aligned to its apostolic origins; an authentically shared leadership that includes the laity as full partners in decision making and ministry. The canonical structure that has developed over centuries has excluded the Body of Christ from genuine participation in all but the sacraments. In a post conciliar world, our faith remains ever ancient but the structures of the Church must be ever new.</p>  |
| <p>Then allow all of our religious practices to be recognised and understood by the youths of today. This means also making Mass a more appealing practice for our young. As a teacher, I feel God wants us to assist our young to be proudly part of a religious community and tradition that has moved with modern times.</p>  |
| <p>The sign of peace handshake is an excellent germ spreader just before communion, brilliant! H1N1 and all, a no brainer surely! Homilies are so far behind the times! Communication is a two way process! It would make it easier for the priests (maybe) or sometimes and allow clarification. Alter order of the Mass, it could be altered significantly to great advantage! As many prayers as possible professed in the public forum i.e. at Mass, etc. in the plural form i.e. we believe in God instead of I believe in God, etc. and many more prayers expressing thanks rather than asking for more and more as we tend to do at the present time or what we have been doing. Finally I have never been taught that Jesus descended to hell after his death. I even took the trouble of consulting my old Catholic catechism from primary school days which confirmed that my memory still continues to serve me correctly. I believe that to preach that Jesus went to hell is a heresy since it implies that he was a sinner and refutes the example of the rest of his life, and further that God made one huge mistake with Jesus as well as with the rest of us! Perhaps these changes and others could be proactive in helping to change our society or at least a tiny step in another direction after all why have a plenary council if everything is going well with the Church! Maybe it is time the Church started to be a little "radical" and looked forward instead of being arch conservative all or at least most of the time! What is the Church afraid of making a mistake? Remaining as it is, rather would be a great mistake for which we would be answerable to God! Thank you and AMEN!</p> |
| <p>To make a change, to listen to bishops and priests like [ - ] those who see the real world; the outcasts, the refugees, the neglected and our youths, and look after them first! To bring our Church back to one of joy, companionships, belonging.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking Australians and all human beings to be inclusive of each and every one of us. This means treating every person with dignity, respect, compassion and kindness. Non-judgment of those with differences that are not harmful to others and embracing those differences as we grow understand each other in diversity. Caring for each other physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually as well our environment is fundamental. To move forward to enable healing, we need to forgive those who abused the trust and power in faith communities in recent decades.</p>  |
| <p>Be tolerant of each other... including everyone, LGBT (I'm not) but if the Church wants to teach tolerance, it should apply to everyone.</p>  |
| <p>Unity in the Church / The Church should stick to its own teachings, it certainly did not do that in the marriage act.</p>   |
| <p>God is wanting us to have more faith because most people aren't Christian and they don't believe in God. They don't care about God or listen to him, and God is very disappointed in that. God wants us to pray more and go to church more but nobody cares. So he wants us to have faith.</p>  |

How can we help the Church be better having suffered a lot from child sexual abuse?

1. To think about ways to teach the faith through avenues apart from within Catholic systemic Schools. If the future holds that there may be imposed restrictions (which is a possibility, politically in Australia) it may be an option to consider (re)introducing a program such as Sunday School where doctrine is passed on in the context of the celebration of Mass, expressing, sharing and supporting each other in the faith within the faith community on The Lord's Day. It may help the entire Catholic Family learn the faith as well (volunteer parents, older adult children) not just children in isolation at school. 2. To form the lay faithful in fashion and appropriate attire for worship in Mass. There used to be a concept of wearing our 'Sunday best' which is non-existent today. To pay particular attention to modesty and dignified presentation. To help souls understand the glory rendered to God in taking care of dress, each one's responsibility to safeguard our neighbour's purity, give the places of worship a high human tone similar to that of places like Buckingham Palace or The Sistine Chapel. To keep consider circumstances like financial situations, temperature and climate, ethnic or cultural expression. With regard to formation, to do it with a lot of sensitivity as many people see fashion and dress as self-expression and exercising personal freedom. 3. To consider developing a music ministry that helps souls come to the full understanding and appreciation of The Liturgy and Holy Communion. Australia is a society highly influenced by popular culture. Music as a form of entertainment for personal or collective enjoyment can be accessed with ease and is an industry whose products are one of the most aggressively marketed in the world. The Australian Church has an opportunity to draw souls in through the beauty of liturgical music. There are some musical styles and lyrical compositions that can engage and entertainment but are lacking in being conducive to prayer. In the end, it can all seem a matter of subjective taste (from music minister to the next) and subject to the capacity of the volunteers (singers, musicians). But the Church may benefit from refining our current music ministry.

Perhaps in such a culturally diverse country like Australia God would like us to unite in harmony with each other and not focus on the minority groups that seem to be dominating our world from a religious and possibly cultural sense.

Come back to me with all your heart! I made a submission just recently but felt I would like to add more.

I'm a relatively new Catholic—received into the Church five years ago at the age of 54. Nothing I can ever say will fully measure the joy my faith and my new community family has brought to me. Perhaps the best indicator is that I'm married to someone who probably believes in God, wasn't brought up with any faith, but is so impressed with the change it has brought in my life, that he fully supports my Catholic faith and happily ensures I attend Mass at least each Sunday. I feel we should do more to engage most people with the faith, preach the love of God and his unending care for us so that we are happy to attend Mass. Too often the homilies are bland, recapping almost word for word the readings. Why not describe how that particular piece of scripture has empowered a person or made the person think again about the way he/she is living? Relating scripture this way will make it relevant to people. Attending Mass should not be a weekly eternal life insurance premium, but something we attend joyfully and participate with gusto. Some sort of Bible study should be available—whether it's a correspondence or reading format or a group gathering to discuss scripture and their faith. For people like me, RCIA graduates, this is vital. I have completed three correspondence courses from an American Catholic organisation which were all brilliant AND the Certificate in Pastoral Formation with the Institute for Mission (Parramatta Diocese). I've completed a lot of study during my life—I've never enjoyed or gained more than I did with the CoPF course. It was stunning and it was the sheer passion, zest for life and good humour of the lecturers that made it so. Our congregations are well-informed, intelligent, able to ferret out information from Mr Google and that means our faith communities need to foster understanding of scripture, of the relevance of prayer and to encourage the feeling of community and family. I believe it is this last part, the feeling of community and family that will keep our parishes alive. Why? Because our biological families are becoming smaller. People insulate themselves from the rest of the world as a

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| <p>way to give themselves peace and quiet from our bustling world. Bustling isn't good. We need to learn to value people and relationships with people if we're to value our relationship with God. Overall, we need to encourage people to talk and learn about our faith because we are educated people and our parishes need to function as an extended family home NOT just a place where we celebrate the Mass. Because if we are to feel the magnitude of the extraordinary gift of the Eucharist, it will happen when we are at peace with each other and joining together in gratitude and prayer. Our priests must learn to present scripture with a personal touch and to speak in a relaxed and interesting way. Encourage them to join Toastmasters or another group that teaches good public speaking. We can revitalise our parishes and God will work with us.</p>   |
| <p>I believe God would have us be obedient to the instructions that Jesus gave us. In Matthew 28:18-20 "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses." Acts 1:8 New Evangelisation—Pope Paul VI in Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise. What Are Characteristics of The New Evangelisation? See attachment. The Lord provided a New Pentecost for the New Evangelisation. Pope John XXIII asked Catholics to pray before and during the Second Vatican Council: "Renew in our day, O Lord, your wonders as in a new Pentecost." In the years following the Council, a great many Catholics have come to a release or a renewal in their experience of the power of the Spirit. The Discernment of the popes, Pope Paul VI, "How could this 'spiritual renewal' not be a 'chance' for the Church and the world? "Besides grace let God's Church be able to obtain and possess the charisms....God grant that the Lord will still increase this rain of charisms to make the Church fruitful, beautiful, marvellous, and capable of inspire respect, even the attention and amazement of the profane world." Pope John Paul II "Be open and docile to the gifts of the Spirit! Accept with gratitude and obedience the charisms that the Spirit never ceases to bestow." Pope Francis, Pentecost 2017, "I ask all of you, each of you, that as part of the stream of grace of the Charismatic Renewal planning seminars of life in the Spirit, in your parishes, in your seminaries and schools ... share the baptism of the Spirit and your catechism, because it is produced by the work [of the] Holy Spirit through a personal encounter with Jesus, which changes lives." "Share baptism in the Holy Spirit with everyone in the Church." We need a change in the culture of the Church sacraments and Charisms In so far as "baptism in the Spirit" is a renewal of one's sacramental baptism and confirmation it is intended for all Catholics. It is not a "special grace" for some, but a commonplace grace for all. Cardinal Ratzinger "It (CCR) is evidence of hope, a positive sign of the times, a gift of God to our age. It is a rediscovery of the joy and wealth of prayer over against theories and practices which had become increasingly ossified and shrivelled as a result of secularised rationalism." We do not need resistance or even passive resistance, but they need the understanding, support and encouragement of the local bishops and priests. I firmly believe and hope that Life in the Spirit Seminars be introduced in seminaries, schools, and parishes and be made part of the training of catechist so we can share the grace of baptism of the Spirit and, because it is produced by the work of the Holy Spirit through a personal encounter with Jesus, which changes lives it produces evangelist. See The attachments.</p> |
| <p>He is asking us to re-consider our priorities.</p>   |
| <p>God is asking us to be patient, to pray for our own Church to change as the people change, ensure that all members of the Church are treated fairly and equally. Protect the ones that need to be protected from the ones that do harm, the main aim to spread the word of God, not just through Gospels, through teachings in all schools of the Catholic 'God'.</p>  |
| <p>To love one another, be open to all views—and not be judgemental there should be a place for all in the Church, move away from clericalism, admit the wrongs of the past by our leaders and priests particularly in relation to the Royal Commission into institutional sexual....., to create opportunities for all types of people to actively be part of Church life, speaking up about social justice issues—the bishop's social justice statement is a good start, be humble and forthright in living our faith.</p>  |
| <p>To turn back to prayer in our daily lives. To look for good in others, put them first, love our neighbour. Sharing faith—We pray when we are in trouble but must remember to thank God when</p>  |

our prayers are answered. Look after the elderly and sick in our parish. To give back to them for their long service to our parish life. Sometimes they are forgotten in their time of need e.g. when suffering from dementia or a serious illness. They may need someone to visit them and support them. This is a very worthwhile parish ministry to be encouraged. To have some follow up with parents who have attended the preparation classes for their children to receive the sacraments to encourage them to attend Sunday Mass in the future and join our parish life.

"Change on Churches Teaching on Creation". WHY should we change the teaching: • Modern day (outdated) teaching is unacceptable to the current generation. In an undesired event (e.g. sickness) you cannot just say "it is God's Will" and expect a young person to accept such an explanation. I am 75 years old and I find difficulty in accepting such statements. However, I believe there is an explanation which cannot be disputed. • Questions asked on sickness and "why me"....." why does God allow it".....etc. At a "Q and A session on the ABC, George Pell, I felt had difficulty in providing an answer. • The reason for suffering at all. Why must we????????? WHY CHANGE IN THIS WAY: • Because there is an explanation why we are where we are. • Because there is an explanation why we must suffer. • Because there is an explanation why we have wars. • Because there is an explanation why there is sin. • Understand the existence / non-existence of the devil and hell. • Why all the different Religions. WHY CHANGE NOW: • Because if we don't change now we are losing and will lose many of our younger people. • To be equipped with answers and don't get caught in an embarrassing situation like, what I believe happened to George Pell at the Q and A Program. • Could encourage people to work for more love, peace and equality in our world. • I believe will bring more people to believe in a Divine Being who created and placed us in this world for a purpose. God Bless and Regards, [ - ] —[ - ] parish [ - ] Phone: [ - ]

An overhaul of the management of parish resources, and their management so that Pastors are freed from this burdensome responsibility. If this means a change in Diocesan structures then so be it. Secondly, the pastoral, theological and leadership gifts of all the baptised needs to be fostered by parish management teams answering to the Diocese, not the local Pastor. The Pastor would be one part of the parish Management team. Thirdly, adult faith development opportunities need to become well-funded Diocesan initiatives. (See attachment)

The Church needs to get its message out there to the wider community. It greatly needs to positively engage the media and should consider using its resources to set up a broadcasting radio station (similar to HOPE FM or 2CH) such as it had when 2SM was owned by the Church. A television channel would also be a worthy ambition as the secular / anti-Christian message is currently too powerful. The Catholic voice needs to be loudly heard, and the reasons for our stances explained, to all of society. Proclaiming our message in a way that engages and changes society. Also explain to young Catholics reasons for Church laws and stances e.g. why sex before marriage is wrong, why Catholics need to get married in Church, etc.? Our bishops need to emulate Christ's apostles in being forthright proclaimers of the Gospel message to the outside world—not just leaving it up to lay Catholics. They need to call out politicians when they're wrong and not be silenced just because of Government funding for Catholic schools.

More real involvement by the laity in the decision- making of the Church. More real involvement of women at all levels of Church life and a much greater emphasis on adapting liturgy to the children and young people. Trust in the priesthood needs to be restored and so much more rigorous recruitment and training processes need to be part of an overhaul of the selection and training of seminarians. Priests need to have ongoing formation and training and participate in regular pastoral supervision. Priests should be given the opportunity prior to ordination to live either a celibate or married life. Enable married deacons full ordination and enable women to the diaconate.

To respond more effectively to those bereaved by suicide. This needs to happen both publicly and in individual pastoral responses. Priests and deacons and anyone in ministry needs to understand that those bereaved by suicide need to know that their loved one has not been "damned for eternity—but loved and embraced by God". We need to encourage public support for the families and loved ones and hold regular liturgies that give a faith filled pastoral response to those who are bereaved by

a loved one's suicide.

To restore trust in the priesthood a number of things need to change. To reduce clericalism and the many aspects of clerical culture that led to the widespread crime and sin of sexual abuse against children and young people and abuse of vulnerable adults there are changes that need to be made in an attempt to change the current culture that despite the Royal Commission and the acceptance of the multitude of recommendations. Changes include adopting the well-researched and effective methods used in the world to recruit and train and develop employees. Use effective selection and recruitment methods to select seminarians. Use effective ongoing training and professional development for formation and support of priests and bishops and deacons and religious brothers and sisters. As well as spiritual direction ensure that all priests and religious in active ministry participate in regular pastoral supervision. Ensure that all in active ministry have regular structured appraisals.

To have more respect and understanding for priests who have left the ministry. I know of one priest who was told by the parish priest when he went to a parish of the diocese he had worked in that "I can't give you a public welcome (at the beginning of Mass, but welcome anyway!)" The priest who had left obtained a dispensation from Rome and had given 27 years to the people of that diocese.

1. That the Australian Catholic bishops uphold, teach and explain the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception and family planning, and that they finance the training of Natural Family Planning instructors, so that every parish in Australia has access to accredited instructors. 2. That a national basilica to Our Lady Help of Christians, patroness of Australia, be built in Canberra, on the land given by the Federal Government in the 1920s for that purpose, so that the Catholic people of Australia and others have a place of national pilgrimage to Our Lady.

We need to preach the Message of Pentecost. We need to understand and identify that the message of Pentecost is one of the most urgent issues to be addressed in the Catholic Church. Time and time again, Saint Paul affirmed to his Churches that the same Spirit that moved in Jesus moved in them. This is the same task facing today's Church community. Our Church must forcefully affirm the divine presence in the lives of our people. Our priests and we must take this Message of Pentecost to the people. If we are to break through into peoples lived experience and free their entrenched attitudes that prevent them from hearing the Good News, we must convince people that everyone is part of the Body of Christ, everyone a bearer of the Spirit of God and that now is the time to let the Fruits of the Spirit be seen in action among the people. Our priests must embrace the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. A striking feature of the task facing Church leadership in this new millennium is how similar they are to those which were faced in the early Church. There they needed to focus on Jesus and his teaching about God and being aware of the physical presence of God's Spirit and his power within and among them, challenging them to give strong witness to the presence of that Spirit by the manner of living despite the pagan world that surrounded them. As St Paul himself says: "Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and sermons that I gave, there was none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the Power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God." (1 Cor 1:3-5). How do We once again bring this Message of Pentecost to Our parishes in this new millennium? We need to be like Saint Paul, in affirming his people that the same Spirit that moved in Jesus moved in them, told them that their task was to keep this Spirit visible in many ways. The role of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the active dispensing of the Gifts of the Spirit to our people must again become fully alive in our Church. This must be a feature of our preaching and our liturgy if we are to break through to people's lived experience and free them from the entrenched attitudes that prevent them from appreciating the Good News that everyone is a bearer of the Spirit of God and show that the fruits of the Spirit is again the norm in our congregations. Our priests must bring about this change in our parishes and dioceses. This is not an option but the way ahead.

Trust in the Catholic Church requires: Truth and Justice ... With reference to a news report on Friday 21st December 2018: "Pope Francis has urged predator priests who have sexually abused children to turn themselves in, in one of his strongest comments ever on the crisis sweeping the Roman Catholic Church." What does God want of the Church? The Pope has just spelt it out: those who have abused children and I would add, any vulnerable person, should hand themselves over to the justice system of the state immediately. A guilty plea should be submitted to avoid any extra expense for the community. It is also quite obvious that any cleric who has covered up and knew that they were doing so e.g. transferring a priest or religious after a complaint had been received, should also admit what they have done and plead guilty in the justice system of the state. Many people know that we have many wonderful priests who do God's work in a manner that is to the best of their abilities and these are the great majority. Those who have let everyone down in the terrible ways mentioned above, have caused enormous damage, and must do whatever is possible to admit the truth and face the justice that is appropriate to them. If these individuals were to do this, they would go a long way towards repairing some of the damage that has been done and for many, I believe this would be far more important than financial compensation that will never redress the suffering of those afflicted. For many to Trust the Church, we desperately need the Truth and Justice that would be the end result of doing what the Pope has just requested. Since the Pope is God's Vicar on earth, then this is what God requires, and the Pope is indicating this in no uncertain terms. Without such action, we are likely to be destined to see the Church decline even further and of necessity, a larger and larger burden placed on the remainder of the parishioners to keep financing the good works of the Church as well as the maintenance of their parish Churches. This in turn will see more people leave as this sort of burden becomes too much. Many of our Church members are already in the lower socio-economic strata of our society and can find it challenging to support their parish Church as much as they would like and some of our older parishioners can rightly object to being asked to give more than they already do. I recently forwarded a submission in which I referred to a priest who misbehaved towards me and indeed a number of other people. I am not speaking of sexual misbehaviour, but it was quite terrible. This priest was asked to retire by his bishop but I note that he is once again being called to be active by another bishop. Therefore I indicate that the Church cannot be trusted. I find this a great sadness as I am a regular Mass goer and have for many years been contributing with my wealth, time and talent. We need to follow the Pope's lead seriously.

To make an effort to seek Him, find Him, know Him and love Him. Carry this love of God into our daily lives of family, work, friends, interests and community so that others may be drawn to God's love.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN. Drawing on my personal experience—being born in the Sudan into a staunch Catholic family, attending Catholic school, then gradually allowing myself during my twenties to slip away from practicing my faith, and then starting once more to practice my faith in my mid-30s, —Getting married and becoming a father—Starting and running my own business—joining Opus Dei, —Giving spiritual talks to group of like-minded men for the last 5 years—and in an attempt to draw some positive lessons from the past 50 years, it would be a good idea to create a central body run by the conference of bishops that would be dedicated to provide information and background on the various dogmas and teachings of the Church. In the years gone by, the Authority of the Church used to be highly respected, and the Church Authorities did not need to go into any effort to publicize or provide any information about any dogma or teaching of the Church. However, if modern trends are any indication, the future generations will require a detailed convincing public awareness campaign to accept to remain in the fold of the Church. Specific urgent areas of public information must be directed at:- 1 What is the meaning of the Church Magisterium and who does it compose of? 2 How does the Church magisterium consider or proclaim any dogma or new teaching. 3 Why does the Church magisterium go through so much effort to ensure that any new dogma or teaching can never negate any existing dogma or teaching? 4 Why is the seal of confession sacrosanct, and why can it never be broken. 5 What is the meaning of "Nihil Obstat", and why is it important to be provided for any liturgical or scripture book? 6 What is

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| <p>the authority of a bishop, and why is it vitally important for priests, clergy and laity to be obedient to their bishop? 7 Why is it important to adhere to approved texts of liturgy and scripture, and specifically to avoid any gender fluidity in any of these texts? 8 What was the background for celibacy of priests and religious—and why is it more important today to protect this treasured practice? 9 What are the basic tenets of our faith. 10 Why has Our Lord Jesus Christ chosen a Lady to be the biological Mother of God, and yet only chose men to be priests? 11 Why does the Church condemn public acts of sinful behaviours such as sacrilege, worshipping other Gods, swearing in vain, not practicing one’s faith on Sundays, murder, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, theft, lying, yet never condemns in public those individuals who commit these sins? 12 The importance of protecting the institution of marriage and the family unit.</p>   |
| <p>I shall be frank. Presently the Church is resting on its laurels. Scripture tells us we must evangelise. Yet we ignore this directive, which comes directly from Our Lord Jesus Christ. We have become a "Feel Good" Church, where outsiders no longer matter. Church activity is conducted inside buildings and little attempt is ever made to reach outside its containment. The most effective way to reach people on Mass is through the multimedia, namely the Movies. Yet we completely ignore this most effective way to communicate. The Church MUST go into movie production, on a big scale, globally. Financed by the Vatican, creating blockbuster type holy movies that illustrate religious themes accurately, to inspire people. This is of course an expensive endeavour. Especially as the quality MUST be of the best that even Hollywood could produce. And yet, the venture could be financed on a global scale, organised through the Vatican, to make it feasible, if we were really serious! In summary, the Church will never die, but we, yes we, are entirely to blame for its downturn, and the decline of global morality.</p>   |
| <p>To be true to His Church as He intended, to be guided by the Holy Spirit to be examples of His love, mercy and to evangelize as He intended.</p>   |
| <p>1—A call for unity/standardisation in the running of parishes and uplift the environment. 2—A more inclusive Church. More compassionate to those in need. Not afraid to take a hard stand. 3—A better Catholic education to the regular faithful that go to Mass each weekend, Catholic schools K-12, catechism at Public schools and the Australian Catholic University. 4—A better commitment and deeper preparation before receiving some sacraments. 5—We need to review the scope of Clergy, make them accountable and true to their vows. 6—For a more accountable Church in Australia.</p>  |
| <p>God is asking us to get Religious Education as taught in Catholic Schools back on track. (see my attachment)</p>   |
| <p>I think God is asking us to connect with each other on an individual level. This means everyone in the Church from the clergy down. The Church needs to be relevant and approachable with less emphasis on the pomp and ceremony and more on engaging with each individual.</p>  |
| <p>1} Instruct Catholics to observe the 10 Commandments. 2} Encourage them to meditate on the Gospels while praying the daily Rosary. 3} Establish the Legion of Mary in all parishes and where it already exists, please support it as the Legion of Mary is the extension of the priest to bring Jesus to His people. 4} Have a proper system of catechesis for teaching children the Catholic faith in Catholic schools and support SRE in state schools. The curriculum should be in line with our Lord's instructions and sound teaching and not one where children can form their own opinions on eternal truths. Catholic schools should also reserve and defend their right to continue to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus with regard to faith and morals. They should not be influenced by the atheistic agenda of the LGBTQI communities, which actively seek to erode family life and lead innocent children to hell. 5} Encourage young men and boys to help the ordained priest at the celebration of Mass as this will definitely encourage them to think about the priesthood and offer their services and talents by joining the seminaries across Australia. This is how we should deal with the shortage of priests. The Church cannot and should not try to fix that problem by advocating for women priests and married priests. Another way of tackling this problem is to encourage all parishes to have all night adoration in Churches and encourage parishioners to set up a roster in order that someone is praying all night and the Church is never unattended. 6} The Church should never encourage</p> |

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| <p>Muslims to infiltrate it by allowing them access to the Church so they can teach their religion. Jesus commands us to baptise all people and bring them to Him. We should never think it charitable to allow Islamic influence on our Faith in the Crucified Christ.</p>  |
| <p>To stand firm on His revealed Word in the Scriptures. To teach the Bible faithfully. To conduct ourselves in ways that honour His Word and bring Him glory. To demonstrate His love to the people around us without compromising the Scriptures. To love Jesus.</p>   |
| <p>To bring back the teaching of the Catechism teaching the ten commandments. No women priests. Celibacy to remain in the priesthood. Mass being the centre of our lives.</p>  |
| <p>I think that God is asking us to reflect deeply on the failings of the Church in Australia and to listen to the laity, other Christians and the whole community. We must be prepared to change, renew and reform.</p>   |
| <p>What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? God is asking us to show him devotion and more love in return for his unmeasurable sacrifice on the cross in order to redeem us from eternal domination because the original sin. We are required to have a deep relationship with God who pours his love upon us. We need to increase our love and charity to the others. We need to promote and reinforce learning of the scriptures, individually or through groups to understand Gods warnings or encouragement and learn how to live our life. Make it attractive for people to attend good talks/speeches/seminars, which can be worth it and challenges us. Speakers who can explain in simple terms the Bible so that we can be more interested in knowing more about our faith and Gods' truth. The school should play a stronger part in nurturing young adults in their Catholic faith through prayers, music, scriptures, movies etc. To have faith in Gods' truth and to know more about sin and hell to fight the idea of relativism. More Catholic exposure, not be afraid of tell the truth, no act because of false "Political correctness" new ideologies. Should go back to the basic of our faith, be more traditional and study the benefits of our traditions. Be more conservative in the teaching of the doctrine. Proper training/studies for Catholics. Speak about the evil and the constant fight against it. Be more militant and defend our Church against liberalism and relativism. Stop apologizing and instead of condoning all kind of abuses, simply condemn them and do not accept them, abusers (who are not repentant) should not be part of the Church and measures should be taken to protect vulnerable people. Do not fear the homosexual agenda and prochoice groups. Priests/nuns should wear the habits.</p> |
| <p>God is asking me to invite the immediate members of my family to hear Sunday Mass together, if possible. If not, just hear Mass on Sunday.</p>  |
| <p>For the Church to be fully inclusive of all its members where marriage is concerned. The Church would benefit if priests were to marry perhaps this would elevate the shortage of religious. The members of the Church whose marriages have ended in divorce many times through little fault of their own should be allowed to marry in the church instead of being told they can marry in the Anglican or Uniting Churches if they want a church wedding. This has happened to my family and also friends.</p>   |
| <p>I believe we need to have more people return to their/our church, which may be possible if a Third Rite Of Reconciliation was conducted as a once off following proper instruction. It is very difficult for a person to go to reconciliation after being away from the confessional for many years. The second point—I think that Bible Study courses should be introduced at a parish level if appropriate instructors are available. Also—we are meant to be a community but we fail to have community functions except for religious activities—yes people are busy but a community picnic or dinner could be successful.</p>   |
| <p>I think God is asking us to hang in there through all the turbulence that is the Catholic Church in present day times.</p>  |
| <p>Talking about the faith to our family especially the youths is always difficult. We seem to lose them between the ages of 16 to 25. They don't see "living" faith rather the doctrinal faith. They also do not have an inspiring / united identity like Hillsong. Youths gather at World Youth Day but not all are privileged enough to attend but they tend to fizzle out upon their return.</p>   |

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| <p>We need to address the BIG middle where we seem to lose our teenagers when they are between 17 to 22 years old. They fail to understand the relevance of Church and Church community. They don't seem to find peer groups or mentors to help them with their daily living. Questions related to BF/GF relationship, sex before marriage. The Church does not have a position and even if it does—it is quite wishy-washy.</p>  |
| <p>Many of our parish priests are involved in the administration or the running of the Church that they have forgotten their vocation—Pastoring. Thus, they have lost their first vocation—to pastor to the community.</p>  |
| <p>To have confessions before Mass as they were years ago, I remembered as a child, I looked forward to confessions and Mass. I think it would keep younger people at Mass and not staying away from the Catholic faith, keeping them pure in spirit. Thank you.</p>  |
| <p>To stay strong in the face of adversity. Be kind to one another. Be truthful to the WORD OF GOD.</p>   |
| <p>To live as Jesus taught us in relation to others.</p>  |
| <p>I think God is asking us to hold firm. It seems like people want us to change as a Church because society is changing but to me that seems like more of a reason to hold fast to our faith. I voted against gay marriage and am opposed to the government forcing my children to be taught things contrary to their faith when they attend a faith-based school! It is becoming increasingly difficult to live out our faith when it is so contrary to what society is teaching. I don't believe we should change the priesthood to include married priests as in my experience it is difficult to fulfil my obligations as a wife and mother as well as my obligations to my spiritual life. I cannot see how a priest, with all the duties he has, can attend to those duties and the duties of married life. I think it would be good to have more formation for lay people, however. I am fortunate that our school community provides a lot of formation for both parents and children but there are many Catholics who are not properly formed in Church teaching. On the other hand, some parishes such as ours do try to offer extra formation but it is not always well taken-up. In short, I would like the Church to support Catholics in living their faith in an increasingly un-Christian world. I believe that God is asking us to be steadfast and commit more strongly to our faith at this time.</p> |
| <p>God is asking of us what He has always asked of His followers—that we remain faithful to His teachings handed down to us through the Church He founded on His Apostles. We are not free to change what Christ Himself instituted, especially regarding the priesthood and marriage. At Fatima, our Blessed Mother warned us to amend our lives and to stop offending God, Who is already much offended. That was a hundred years ago, and judging by events in this country since then, with the loss of faith, poor catechesis, widespread acceptance of contraception abortion, IVF, divorce, co-habitation, same-sex 'marriage', even among Catholics. We have much ground to recover since we obviously have lost our sense of sin. It is imperative that the Church in Australia rejects false teaching, restores reverence to our liturgies, beautifies our Churches, and teaches the Faith unambiguously. Our young people deserve no less. They are hungering for the real Faith, not some counterfeit version of it.</p>  |
| <p>We need to reach out to the marginal especially lesbians, gays, bisexual, trans and transgenders and Intersexuals (L.G.B.I.) Catholics. These groups of people who follow the Catholic faith need to feel a part of the Church and there needs to be a change in the Australian Catechism. The Gospels preach that we should love one another and then the Catechism must change in the wording so that it also mirrors the language of the Gospels.</p>   |
| <p>Heal; learn from the mistakes of the past, not only the abuse of children; to significantly press the 'refresh' button; to lead the rest of the world in creating, re-energising, a Church that speaks of the person of Jesus Christ, not the institution of the Catholic Church.</p>  |
| <p>To love God and love one another.</p>  |
| <p>To be decent human beings who respect the rights of all. No more abuse ever.</p>   |
| <p>I think God is asking us in Australia to make an effort to be more aware of His presence in our day to day lives. How do we become more aware of God's presence in our life? By getting to know Him</p>  |

through His Word and sacraments, it will become very natural for us to live our faith and share it with others.

God is asking us to really reach deep in our hearts to abide by the Law of Christ. In so doing, we need to reform the Catholic Church in Australia so that it is unified and consistent across all its people. The Law of Christ rebukes exclusivity, is merciful to all, shuns materialism and seeks equality amongst all. How this relates to various sects within the Catholic Church is self-evident when one looks at the practices, e.g., of those within the Opus Dei sect who set themselves apart from mainstream Catholics e.g., have their own schools, disallow association outside the sect and shun receipt of the Eucharist from lay ministers and are basically activists for their cause which continues to alienate others who wish to abide by the Law of Christ. These are only a few examples of what I have seen in practice. I believe wholeheartedly that God would really like us all to come home to Him in our hearts practising our universality (the meaning of "Catholic") and actively teaching unification of our practices as lay people, lay ministers and ordained priests, bishops etc. There was no point to implementing Vatican II if we are getting mixed messages all the time.

While praying about the plenary question, a thought came to me that the Church in response to the sex abuse scandal should make a significant act of reparation—something that would benefit the whole of society. In the past, great cathedrals have been built as acts of reparation. They continue to inspire by their beauty and benefit the whole culture. As I continued to pray about this, an idea came to me that we lack in Australia a School of Sacred Music—a place where choirs, cantors, organists could be trained. I think God is asking us to bring beauty into the liturgy.

More Catholics to put their faith into action. We believe Catholics want to do more than be a 'Sunday-Mass attendee', to be more involved and support their parish. There are a number of parish groups, with different purposes and agenda however it is not clearly communicated as to the activities of each group, how they contribute/support to the parish, when they meet, who to contact to gain more information. We support our parish through the Legion of Mary and even as active parishioners we do not know enough about other parish groups. We believe the younger generations want to play a more active role and want the opportunity to do more for their community, to give back and help those less fortunate—rather than volunteering for charities let's show them where the opportunity is within their Church parish. The modern Church is becoming more liberal, which may attract and retain more people; however we feel having rules/requirements will ensure upholding respect for the Catholic faith, their Church and its traditions e.g. communication/education on appropriate dress code at Mass, ensuring parents are practicing their faith when decision is made to have their children complete the sacraments—they are the ongoing example to their children.

We believe the Catholic Church needs to include all. The decision by some parish priests to decide a child cannot be Baptised in the Catholic Church because his or her parents do not attend Mass on a regular basis is so wrong. They are denying the child the right to become a Christian. In cases I know of, the child then goes to a Public School and not the local Catholic School because they will again be knocked back. These children go to the Scripture classes and are taught about God by Family.

Compassion and caring for people and our environment, just as at all times to love one another as He loves us.

First Topic—Youth. Ensure the youths remain true to the values of the Catholic Church. We need to nurture their faith through a variety of experiences, so they can discover and deepen their faith. The fruits of which they will live it in different ministries. Second Topic—'The Emerging Role of the Laity' Laity who are Spirit driven and who are committed to the Gospel values of the Catholic Church be provided with appropriate training to allow them to take on more responsibilities in the parish community. In this light, administrative roles will then be shared between the priest and the laity. We recommend that long serving married Deacons be given the choice of being ordained as priests. Third Topic—Social and Environmental Issues. Be proactive about environmental issues such as: pollution, environmental degradation, energy conservation and responsible consumerism. Be proactive on issues about human dignity: such as refugees, homelessness, modern day slavery,

violence of any form and addictions. Be proactive on these issues through all types of media, petitions and rallies.

To deepen our life of prayer and our love of God through individual prayer and communal worship.

By all the accounts of visions of the Blessed Virgin, I would say: to repent and take God into our hearts. Our Lady asks us to pray and fast. Our Commandments are to Love God and love your neighbour. Nowadays most people have forgotten these commands. Mainly, because of the world changes, highlighted by different forms of media, have changed our minds. We have moved into the 'materialistic era'. We have forgotten our beginnings when living was tough and we clung together and to our faiths for support. Science is a wonderful source to invent and experiment to help mankind. Perhaps we have gone a little too far ahead of ourselves delving into God's domain. We are always questioning the 'whys'. Our values have changed. To change our values they will have to be brought about through the children. All schools should teach the children values of conduct, spending and gratification for receiving love and respect. First, however, the media needs curbing back to teaching parents what our values are. I think the television program codes are not up to standard and some parents are not teaching their children the valuable lessons they need, to reach maturity with an open heart towards others and a reverence for God. There are many people out there administering these principles to congregations around the world. Australia has always been a "lay back" country in the years after WWII. The typical answer to any question is 'she'll be right mate!' We have to stand up and correct all the mistakes we have made and make Australia a generous country for everyone including our Aboriginal people, refugees, lay people and clergy to do the right thing. Flood the media with ads, with money collected from all religions, to reach out and touch our hearts with God's teachings. Tell people what has been swept under the carpet and let them know we won't stand for these bad behaviours to continue. We have started, thanks to many people with the paedophile reports. We need to show the world that we care for our people including those living on the streets, mental health, battered wives and especially the 'uncared for children', with solutions of taking off the media the nudity, vulgar language and violence, replacing media with stories of helping others, feeding the hungry, housing the needy and stories of the hurt and bewildered people to show what our country is trying to correct in God's name. Teach children the "Glad" game, like an old movie called Pollyanna. Them to be glad about what they have and forget about what they haven't got. All material items erode, burn, wilt, break and get forgotten eventually. There is a need for children to get back to basic toys and get off those electronic machines for a conservative amount of time to let them become more social and better-speaking adults who will one day be running our country, Australia.

I believe God is asking us in Australia today exactly the same thing that he was asking at the time of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. That is: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." We are still being asked to listen to what Jesus said and also to what he taught us by the example of how he lived and died, and rose again. This unique example of what it actually means to be human, to live with inclusive love for all our sisters and brothers, to be selfless, to be aware that we are children of God and the brothers and sisters of Jesus, to genuinely appreciate that we are all loved by God as part of his extraordinary creation and that we should not be afraid as we all have the potential to become, like Jesus, both human and divine. We need to listen with the ear of our heart to the words of Jesus. We need to join in the continuous prayer of Jesus to our Father that we may all be one with him and participants in the ever flowing exchange of love and grace that is the Trinity. I believe that this will only be possible if we cease our persistent concerns with temporal wealth, comfort and the endless distractions of possessions and begin to take seriously our true nature as spiritual beings. The Christian Church must rediscover its mystical roots and begin to educate its members, and the world, in the meaning of prayer as the true expression of our awareness of the meaning of creation and accept that we are part of a wondrous plan whose evolutionary path is groaning for a completion in Christ and our becoming aware of our true nature.

SUGGESTION. I believe that the P.C. team should be trying to reach out to our teenage children in our High Schools. They are after all our future, and they are staying away from Mass in Doves. How

do we reconnect? How about we run a program in our schools in the Parramatta Diocese from years 7 to 12? Asking the student the P.C. question, "What do you think God is Asking" etc.? A selected teacher in each school is appointed to conduct the program. In one school, use classes 7, 9, and 11. In another school use classes 8, 10, and 12. I feel the student will provide some excellent ideas and provide a clear indication as to what the Church needs to do to attract these Catholics back to their religion. I am a catechist in a year 5 class and I will ask them to take a brochure home about the P.C. Have a yarn with their parents, write down some ideas and bring back their suggestion so that I can forward any ideas to the P.C. Trust you feel the suggestion has some merit. Maybe extend the deadline in order to encourage a response from the High Schools. Thank you [ - ].

The Church needs to go back to basics and keep Jesus' word as in the Bible. We don't need to change the Mass or introduce women priests. Priests should not be allowed to marry. The old traditions of the Church must be kept. There is nothing wrong with it. The devil has entered the Church and wants everything changed. Only thing I see is sexual abuse must be reported and not covered up. The Church needs to talk more about how Satan is real and trying to deceive us all. The Church doesn't talk about purgatory either.

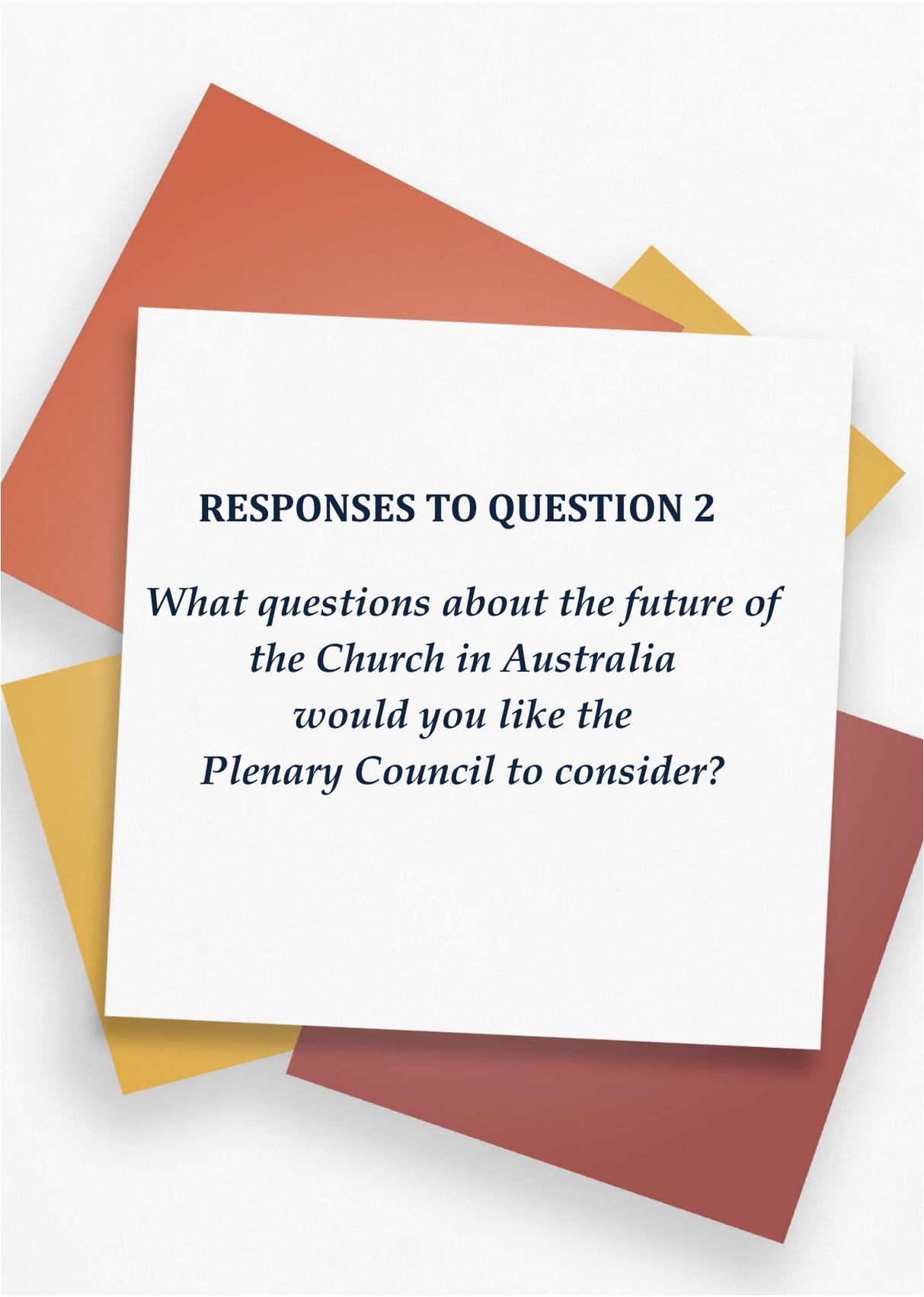
Let us begin by introducing ourselves. We are a Marist community in [ - ] in [ - ]. We are one of eleven international Lavalla200> communities, a group of committed Marists spread across the world. Our community comprises a married couple from [ - ], a young Marist Brother from [ - ] and an older Marist Brother from [ - ]. Our communities witness to the joy of living, working and praying together as an international, intercultural, inter-generational group committed to each other, our shared ideals and our shared mission of ministering to the disengaged youths of western Sydney. Our primary mission is in Marist Learning Zone, a centre which works with young people who are not attending school. We aim to re-engage them with learning and help them to return to school. Our community models a new way of being committed Catholics and a new way of spreading the joy of the Gospel. We believe God is asking us to be a more INCLUSIVE Church. We are disturbed by what we see in many Australian parishes, which are characterised by the ABSENCE of younger people in the pews on Sundays. We acknowledge the work of groups and individuals within the Church who are reaching out to divorced Catholics, our Indigenous brothers and sisters, refugees and asylum seekers, Catholics of varying cultural backgrounds, the LGBTQIA communities, the victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse by Catholic priests and Religious, disenchanted Catholics, priests and religious who have left the Church and many other marginalised groups. However we feel that God is asking us to reach out to these and other marginalised groups in a more comprehensive and inclusive way. We believe that Jesus' love for all was inclusive, non-judgmental and universal. God is asking us to follow this example of Jesus by including these marginalised groups into our Church, welcoming them and celebrating their unique contribution to Gospel living in this country. With Saint John Paul II, we believe that "the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until Aboriginal culture has made its contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others." [Address in Alice Springs, 1986]. Clearly, God is asking us to welcome Aborigines into our Church, to listen to their ancient wisdom and make it central to our faith. We are distressed by the absence of women in Church leadership and life. Inspired by Saint Mary MacKillop, her strength and courage in standing by her convictions, we long for the day when women can take their rightful place in Church leadership with true equality. Most parishes do not even have female acolytes or altar servers. How far away are we from welcoming women equally into liturgical ministry, Church governance and Catholic life generally?

I am glad to hear that Church in Australia has taken this step to hold a Plenary Council at a time that the Church is challenged on its beliefs (i.e. God, Jesus, Mary, life, death, marriage, eternal life etc.) and morals (i.e. arising from institutional safeguards and child abuse). When we left Sri Lanka 27 years ago, Catholics there were being marginalised as a result of the rising Buddhist-Sinhalese Nationalism. We expected a Christian milieu in Australia, where we will be able to practice our religion happily. But, what we have seen here during the past 3 decades is a shift towards total secularism, atheism, anti-Christianity and anti-Church movement developed through media, politics

and University education. I wish to share a small contribution that I made in standing for what I believe and speaking out my spirit in writing. Here are two samples, which you can share with your community if they are of any value. They are in the attachment and are: 1. Where does Nietzsche's philosophy lead us? (Being reviewed by Prof Hans Shelkshorn, Department of Christian Philosophy, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna). 2. Being a Christian in Sri Lanka: Historical, Political, Social and Religious Considerations. (Published in 2015 by Balboa Press, USA). I am an ecologist by training and profession, and a student of anthropology by interest. As such, my apologies if my approach is sometimes forthright. See more in uploaded submission.

\*To go back to the basics of our faith and live it better. \*In particular, have more formational activities (regular ongoing doctrinal classes, talks, attend annual retreats). \*Encourage the faithful to go to the sacraments in earnest, particularly regular Mass, Communion and Reconciliation. Not just on Sundays or once a year.

I believe God is asking Australia to stay focused on the true Catholic faith. This means encouraging every Catholic to learn about our faith through Retreats, Bible classes and adult education provided by our local parishes. Our true faith is awesome and no one will leave the Church when we understand our God. I believe the major issue is, there has been a lack of Catechism teaching after we have completed First Holy Communion. So people from lack of understanding and knowledge of our faith have experienced what our Lord said would happen to the good seeds that fell on the rocky soil and in thorn bushes. It's time the Church in Australia fertilizes Australian soil, so the Gospel can take root and bear fruit. God is not and never will ask us to dilute His teachings, change the dogmas of the Church or give up on our faith and traditions handed down by the Church Fathers. WE have changed, God has NOT and never will. His plan from the Beginning is always GOOD. Vatican II introduced good changes with the intent of making the lay more inclusive in liturgy. In reality, it was used as an excuse by many to slack off and disregard traditions that encouraged us to remain close to God. Let us not now make the same mistake and think the Church has to change its way to thinking to fit in a world that has becoming more ungodly. Instead the Church has to find a way to reach out to people by having vibrant parishes, incorporating good Catholic traditional devotions, (e.g. Divine Mercy, First Friday and First Saturday, these devotions were requested by Our Lord Himself and most people don't even know them because priests don't care to teach them), introducing short catechism teachings at the end of every Sunday Mass (just 1-2 mins), running 1 day retreats; priests should not be afraid to preach about the consequences of sin and about hell, after all our Lord Himself spoke more about hell in the Bible than anyone else. It's not about keeping every parishioner happy, it has to be about speaking God's Word and Truth. I truly believe that the state of the Catholic Church in Australia is due to us becoming slack about learning and growing in our faith. We've become lukewarm or even cold. So God is now asking us to get serious and fortify our walls against Satan and his cunning ways. We cannot defend something we don't know. So I believe God is calling us to grow in knowledge of Him first and foremost.



## **RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2**

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

## QUESTIONS FOR PLENARY COUNCIL

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

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

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

1. How can we support young married couples and young families in their family life?
2. We have too many priests and bishops in support of the homosexual lifestyle or sadly even living a secret homosexual lifestyle themselves. How can we remove them from positions of leadership when they are directly living contrary to Church teaching?
3. How can we do much better and teaching young people the true meaning of sex and the beauty of sex within marriage?
4. What system will you put in place to not compromise long-standing values such as marriage despite the ever-changing world we live in?
5. Why don't we develop lay preachers in Catholic Church that are effective vessels of evangelism?
6. Why don't we inspire, develop, nurture a new generation of musicians, songwriters to create songs that our and future generations can relate to?
7. How do we equip Catholics in our parishes to be active evangelisers?
8. How do we speak out in the culture the truth of ethics and morality in both the Church and the wider culture?
9. How would you stimulate the Catholics into their own values to keep their interest in the Catholic Church?
10. How will you win more people to come to church by better and simple communication to maintain their interest in the Mass?
11. How can I donate to the Catholic Church at any time using B-pay or credit cards?
12. What is the role of the Catholic Church to help people with mental health and disabilities?
13. How can the Church become involved in our daily activities to be proud of being a Catholic?
14. How can the Catholic Church in Australia enrich our cultures and knowledge by inviting Catholic priests from overseas who are very advanced like in their culture such as USA, Canada and England and New Zealand and others?
15. How will you use technology and social media avenues to unite the Church and reach young people more widely?
16. What is the Church providing for our youth?
17. Will the bishops consider the very positive move to allow priests to be married by giving them the choice of celibacy or marriage?
18. Will the bishops consider ordaining the already married Deacons we have in Australia to the priesthood?

19. Why are women not allowed to be priests?
20. If Jesus was for all, especially those out casted, why discriminate against homosexuality?
21. Will the Church have the courage to return to the traditional practice of the faith?
22. Will our seminaries educate and form priests so that they espouse the orthodox Catholic faith?
23. Will the Church in Australia encourage and promote traditional practices, such as the Traditional Latin Mass?
24. Will the Church look at the crisis in Catholic education?
25. Will the Council introduce reforms to ensure the orthodox Catholic faith is strongly taught in our schools again?
26. How we can live the Gospel better and more fully?
27. How families can be places of love and communion again?
28. How people who have grown up with divorced or divorced and remarried parents can appreciate what the Church's teachings on marriage mean?
29. How can our Church be made more relevant?
30. How can we create stronger relationship as a Church community?
31. How can we evangelise our broader community?
32. How can we use the Bible, sacraments and a virtuous life to inform our identity?
33. How can we give better formation to the faithful so that they comprehend, follow and come to love the teachings of the Church?
34. How is the Church going to reach both fallen away Catholics, as well as the unchurched?
35. How will the Church respond to administrative breaches and issues into the future, and how can the Church ensure that ethical and spiritual integrity is upheld across the Church's network?
36. The fact that the Plenary is happening makes me afraid. Afraid that things may change for the worse, under the pressure of the modern world influences. Why is this Plenary happening?
37. How can we make Catholicism relevant to the vast majority of Australians (including/especially newly arrived Australians) while maintaining the important traditions of the Catholic Church?
38. What is happening at our Catholic schools to help parents and children acknowledge, understand and appreciate God's love?
39. How does our laws and policies support Christian life?
40. How can we encourage more people to go back to church and what measures do we have in place to make sure that our Church will be there for future generation?
41. Why can't the Church ordain married men or ordain women as deacons?
42. Why can't divorcees be permitted to receive Holy Communion?
43. How are we going to influence our leaders to realise the importance of the family and considerations of this in industries and the market place?
44. Do our Catholic schools teach the authentic Catholic faith to support the faith in families?
45. How can we maintain the number of Australian Christians we have already, if not raise the number?
46. How can we prevent the Church from becoming more liberal and keep it true to Biblical ideals?
47. Do you believe gay marriage in a Church should be tolerated?

48. What are you doing to address the current pressing issue of climate change facing the world?
49. What is the Church doing to combat liturgical abuse?
50. What is the Church doing to combat misunderstandings about our faith and proper form of practice?
51. Can you create some type of Catechesis/ formation for teachers to teach properly PRO-LIFE ethical issues i.e. IVF, Abortion, Euthanasia etc.?
52. How are our priests being supported and affirmed by the Church in these times?
53. Should the Catholic Church in Australia have its own television and radio station?
54. How can we make the Church more relevant to young people in Australia?
55. Will the Council increase the representation and voting rights of laypeople?
56. Will the Church continue to rid itself of all those who have committed sexual abuse and those who covered it up?
57. How can we strengthen our families so they can be the 'domestic church' as Vatican II talked about?
58. How can families be encouraged to live a life of virtue?
59. How do we provide a welcoming community within the parish so people feel at home?
60. How can we reach out to those who are in the margins and not living moral lives?
61. How can we better engage the parents who bring their children for sacraments only?
62. Will the bishops consider more public positive promotion of the faith and the Church perspectives in the media?
63. Will the bishops consider priests living in community with other priests in their area to combat loneliness?
64. Will the bishops encourage devotion to adoration of the blessed sacrament?
65. Can reconciliation be encouraged and more available, particularly after or before Mass?
66. How can the Church help the faithful to develop responsibility, confidence and competence to evangelise to others around us?
67. How can we ensure that catechism is taught and followed from the pulpit and in all Catholic organisations, especially Catholic schools?
68. How can the Church make the liturgical year alive?
69. What are the things that the Church could do to better educate its faithful so as to stand up
70. How can the Church become less patriarchal, sexist and misogynist?
71. How can the governance of the Church become more transparent and accountable?
72. How can the Church seriously engage with the social sciences and the humanities?
73. How can the Church engage deeply with real issues that affect the future of the planet and civilization such as climate change, nuclear weapons and poverty?
74. Is the Church afraid of the homosexual agenda?
75. Is the Church protecting paedophiles?
76. How can the parish church support its various groups and ensure interconnectedness and better transparency to encourage collaboration, support and participation?
77. Why are so few Catholics using the sacrament of reconciliation? Whatever happened to the third rite of reconciliation?
78. How will the Church reform its ecclesiastical and clerical culture?
79. How successful have we been in importing large numbers of clergy from developing countries to compensate for the absence of local vocations?

80. How effective will this Plenary Council be in addressing the issues raised by Australian Catholics?
81. Will the bishops act decisively in response to concerns raised?
82. Why is the Church not more involved in formation of the laity?
83. Why is the Church not more involved in teaching of the faith to our children in schools?
84. Why has the Church apparently watered down the truths of the faith in the past many years?



**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 25 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.

To be honest, the most recent Australian Catholic Youth Conference left me greatly disappointed in the resolve of the clergy today. I went to many talks but particularly the discussion of gay marriage was truly disheartening. During the entire campaign for the no vote, the youth have been at the forefront, risking themselves for the sake of the Church. And then we come to a Catholic event, and a BISHOP of all people seems incapable of giving a solid answer as to the stance of the Church out of fear of offending people present. I can tell you now that there is a great movement among the youth of Australia to be firm in their faith and what we need is not wishy washy priests who aren't willing to put themselves out there for the sake of the faith, we need good strong leaders to help the youth push forward against the terrible modern culture. I also feel that the decline of quality Masses in [ - ] at least has been a major problem, most of the youth seem to know where the good Masses are and so those parishes are always packed, yet a vast majority of parishes still hold a low quality of reverence, or the individual priests do things with a lack of passion for the Eucharist, or as I mentioned earlier, the music is completely useless in creating an atmosphere of prayer. Now I'm no traditional Catholic, but the reason myself and a lot of the youth at my uni love the Latin Mass is because it's one of the rare places left where we see a true devotion to the Eucharist and of every parish was like that, the Church would truly be a lot stronger today.

There was a time after being educated at an independent Catholic high school here I was severely lacking with any understanding of the Church's teachings in many areas. I had faith because my parents brought me up with faith but my high school failed to teach me much more than social justice. So when I left school I was challenged by many Pentecostal friends and I nearly left the Catholic Church as they convinced me that all our beliefs on Mary and the Pope, etc. were from the devil. I nearly officially left the Church. What saved me thankfully was involvement in youth ministry that I loved. I went to do a youth ministry certificate at the Catholic adult education centre in [ - ]. Thankfully, there I was finally given formation and truth. For the first time I got answers to every single question and challenge. And thankfully I fell in love with the Church and stayed! Another powerful moment was hearing Christopher West speak on the theology of the body. That completely transformed my thinking in the areas of sexual ethics, etc. and again helped me in all the areas I disagreed with the Church in. This is why I am SO passionate about proper formation AND the teaching of the Theology of the Body. You cannot help Catholics to

understand ALL the teachings about marriage and gender and sex without an understanding of this.

The prayer group on Wednesdays at 10am at [ - ] parish has helped me greatly in terms of acceptance, healing and teaching of the Word.

Yes! At my First Holy Communion at [ - ] Catholic Church in [ - ], Sydney in 1962, I confessed that I had been talking in Church. The priest told me to be reverent and to never forget I was a guest in God's House. In 2018, I am appalled by the lack of reverence/ manner and prayer in many churches. I grew up in a Catholic Family and went to a Catholic school. My parents were poor. My mum was sick and dad had to work all the time so as to afford our Catholic schooling and rent/food, etc. My parents are now members of the Communion of Saints and what they taught me all those years ago is still true today. It is not always easy being a Catholic but we must pick up our crosses daily and follow Christ. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus his son. My parents' strong belief and practice, despite the difficulties of life, showed me the way to God. Their humility and goodness shone through to all who they knew and loved them. Thus the faith and good example of parents/teachers/priests, etc. is the most fundamental and important component for our Catholic Faith. My life has been difficult in some ways and I have wavered at times with my faith. I have greatly sinned. However, I am still practicing my religion. The sacraments are my cherished gifts from God. The sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist are my pathway to my Father. Prayer is a rich and important part of my day. My love of Jesus is stronger now than ever before and I seek to be with God always. My Catholic Religion is my life and my love.

In Jan 1970, I had just left the seminary and launched myself into life as a single man. Within five years I had married and separated from my wife and two young sons. And seven years after that I found myself single once again, now with four sons from two relationships since seminary days. It was clear I had no idea how to maintain a committed relationship and had already begun what would become more than a hundred hours of counselling to find out why. Out of a deep sense of failure and inadequacy (especially as a dad) grew a longing for reality, the truth that sets us free. And when God brought my current wife of 33 years into my life I began to experience for the first time that God really does love me. My wife made that clear daily; especially when, after 19 years of Primary school teaching, I was given a very troubled class of 11 year olds who nearly destroyed me. And would have, had it not been for my wife's loving support. Out of these experiences, has come my conviction that the Church's greatest role, bar none, is, through a renew program and then ongoing faith-formation, to convince Catholics what all of them believe but may not experience: God has been smitten with each one of them from all eternity, longing for the right time to bring them into existence and sustain and journey with them through their life (if they would only allow it). And the second role, in my conviction, is that the Church needs to continue doing everything in its power to bring about connection ... because connection is healing. And since the prediction is by 2070 that 7 out of every 10 human beings will be either Christian or Muslim, the Church (People of God) must work hard now to understand the faith of our Muslim brothers and sisters and work with them and all others of good will to bring our world to fulfilment as God has planned from all eternity.

Disgusting decision to close down the Caroline Chisholm Centre For Social Justice in [ - ].

Many a time Jesus has come into my life and saved me in many different ways. One such instance is when I lost my son in a city we were visiting on holidays. It was night time and no one was around. We had been walking back to the hotel. I looked everywhere and was getting desperate. Calling him in the dark streets as we went up the hill towards the hotel. Finally, in desperation I yelled out a prayer to God above—"Jesus help me". Next I heard a voice. It was my son—"Hey mum, I'm here". It was almost instantaneous. Also there have been many times I have prayed for others, for their healing and God has let them recover and live. People who were desperately ill. And for myself, my daily prayer for God to walk beside me as I take my journey through life, to be led in the right direction, to make the right decisions, to follow a path that will do his work in the best way possible for all concerned.

My 9-year-old son was tragically killed in 1986 and it was the faith that kept us going. I often wonder how those people with no faith cope under such circumstances. When it's all said and done Faith is a gift from God but unfortunately some have not been given the gift.

I have been a Catholic all my life but I was away from the faith for a period of 5 years due to a lack of support for youth in parishes and my hunger to know Christ was not addressed for there was nothing to engage the youth to know him personally. I fell away and did many things I regret but after a person reached out to me and by God's grace I was led to return. Strong support showed me attend World Youth Day 2008 and a Youth Group a few suburbs from my own. This encounter started me on the journey. I was then invited to go to A Summer school of Evangelisation run by the Disciples of Jesus Covenant Community. It was there at the age of almost 30 that I experienced God's personal love for me and it changed my life. I took up a Bachelor's Degree in Theology and was more active in my parish sharing evangelisation resources. Eventually, I became a part of the Disciples of Jesus attending weekly sharing groups and community gathering with praise and worship, teaching and fellowship. My faith has come alive and I am passionate about Jesus and making him known and loved.

My story needs to start with some early background of growing up in [ - ] NSW, as a twin born towards the end of World War II started school at [ - ] Primary, then onto the [ - ] College to the end of third year. Because we lived close to the church adjacent to the church, [ - ] and I became altar boys on regular occasions. 6am Mass, then walked home for breakfast, then walked back to school. After leaving school to join our father's business, I joined Catholic Youth Group at [ - ], attended outings and Masses, there I met my further wife [ - ] and later become engaged, we planned our marriage at the Church (now [ - ] Cathedral) In early 1962, a car accident left me in a wheelchair for the rest of my life. Suddenly I was excluded from our church as access was limited. Years later, a wonderful faith filled priest Fr. [ - ] used to visit me. [ - ] still wanted to marry me and with assistance from Fr [ - ] we were married in [ - ] church, [ - ]. I was pulled up the altar steps that I used to sit on as an altar boy. Our marriage has been a wonderful loving life with now four adult children. When we went of holidays around the country and interstate, I would often sit in the car waiting for [ - ] and the children to come out of Mass because of too many stairs or no access for a wheelchair entry. So often it was easier for me not to bother. But our God had not forgotten us. We were invited to a Catholic Marriage Encounter Weekend. That weekend, our faith was lifted to a new height, suddenly we were not alone. At the closing Mass we both felt that

Jesus had come down from the cross above the altar and walked besides us. Our involvement in many parishes (many without suitable access) is History. [ - ] has been teaching Scripture in state schools for over forty one years, and my involvement, at board level, in many disabled charities dealing with inclusion of people with disabilities. We have often approached priests and parishes about "access to God for all" only to be told of the lack of money or it's too difficult. We have been parishioners of [ - ] for many years, driving past closer churches, because [ - ] has good access, disabled toilets, etc. Small point to note\*\* We did a two-year liturgy course at the [ - ] Liturgy Centre and toward the end of the course, a nun spoke to us of the rebuilding of [ - ] after a devastating fire into the Cathedral of today and that stairs would run from the old restored church into the Cathedral. We prepared a paper on access and sent it to the Bishop; the new Cathedral was built with a ramp leading between the holy spaces. Disabled people must not be hidden away, says Pope Francis.

I was away from the Church until once I met my parish priest who asked me to come back to Church. I expressed interest but the church is cold to pray in it in winter.

One of our parish priests used to ask the children and parishioners to sing Happy Birthday to Jesus at the end of each Christmas Eve Mass. I thought this was a wonderful way to educate the children about the real meaning of Christmas.

Prior to 2015, I had read extensively about the Holy Spirit's presence in Creation from the cosmic beginning through evolution making the world we know today. I saw in Laudato Si an effort by Pope Francis to change the thinking of the Church by means of an ecological conversation. Instead, I see some token efforts with business as usual carrying on.

I discerned my vocation to consecrated life for over 15 years. It took another 15 years to be finally consecrated as a consecrated virgin. The call to be a spouse of Christ was incredibly strong. No one or thing was ever going to get in the way. As the first one in my diocese, I found being an unintended trailblazer very hard as various Church people put one unnecessary obstruction after the other in my path, but I had the incredible love of God pulling me to Christ. I remained committed and determined to fulfil the will of God, to follow a "path" that had no path. In August 2017, I was finally consecrated as a consecrated virgin in the Diocese of [ - ]. The glass ceiling had been finally been broken. Everyone who walked with me on the road to consecration, celebrated with me on that most joyful of days. I am so grateful to them. It hasn't been all bliss since my consecration as I like other people face the challenges of everyday life, but I am finally content and at peace. I live and work in the world but I am forever with God in everything I do—in my work, in my prayer and in my play. My challenge these days is to get the Church to use inclusive language that being "consecrated life" rather than "Religious Life" or "religious life". This sort of language is exclusive and discriminatory even though those who write it or use do not intend to be so. It is like using "men" to mean all men and women. My other challenge is to get more airplay to inform people about the vocation and other lesser known forms of consecrated life. For whatever reason I believe that God has given me the strength and the drive to do this work and I am sure I will have the guidance to do this important work of the Holy Spirit.

[https://Catholicoutlook.org/first-consecrated-celibate-in-the-diocese-of-\[ - \]/](https://Catholicoutlook.org/first-consecrated-celibate-in-the-diocese-of-[ - ]/),

<https://Catholicoutlook.org/consecration-women-living-world/>

There are many well educated and inspirational women, theologically astute and gifted who would make excellent deacons and could provide a balance to a male-dominated and therefore unbalanced Church, which is what we presently have here in Australia. To bring in the "feminine" will assist in so many ways—but it must be meaningful.

I have been raised in the faith, Church has always been a part of my life. The beliefs of the Catholic religion have shaped who I am today. Non-Catholic friend: Attending a Catholic school has allowed a greater insight into the faith and gives a greater respect of it and its adherents.

I have grown up in a Catholic family, I have been part of a religious order, and I have worked with teachers and many others across Australia and online at tertiary level, so I have a great breadth of experience that I am drawing upon.

I had the opportunity to attend a Traditional Latin Rite Mass in the Wagga Wagga diocese when I was on holidays there last year. I was amazed at the reverence and beauty of the Traditional Mass. It is totally different to the liturgical abuses I see at Novus Ordo Masses. We need to return to the Traditional Mass (or at least give the faithful the option to attend a Traditional Latin Mass at a local level). The faithful loved that Mass but it was taken off us without our consent. And look at the result—empty churches everywhere, clergy sexual abuse, a lack of priests/nuns/brothers, a lack of cohesive Catholic culture (how exactly are we different from Protestants now?) and proliferation of divorce/abortion/contraception/defacto relationships, etc. etc.

The "Catholic" school my daughter attends teaches 15 year old girls how to put condoms on, how to practice contraception and where to get an abortion (all because "it is on the curriculum"). This is disheartening to Catholic parents. We want our daughter to get a Catholic education, not to learn how to be a feminist, socialist or climate change alarmist.

I have been practising my faith fully for about 11 years, and over that time I have had many experiences, on different scales, good and bad, that have shaped my life and how I think about my faith. I will briefly share one rather general way in which my view of the Church has changed over the last few years that I think will be a relevant point of discussion for the Council. Four or 5 years ago, I would have said that I was generally aware of everything going on in the Church in Australia and indeed the global Church. I was, after all, an adult who had been practising the faith for many years already. However, only over the last 3 years have I realised just how deep are the divisions between different groups of people in the Church. In particular, I'm thinking of people who identify as traditionalists (and the radical version of these traditionalists, who are not all of them) and people who identify as progressive or at least not-traditionally-minded Catholic. The realisation of this division of mine came about simply by meeting new people, by attending different churches, and having different conversations, particularly about the holy liturgy. It was something I was pretty ignorant of a while ago, but now I think about it every day. I personally do not identify with either 'camp', and I think these labels can be quite limiting in different contexts. But clearly, there are people who do not like other people and their suggestions and their ideas. To a certain extent this is normal and natural, but I think it is clearly very bad in the Church right now. Different people call people 'heretic' for different reasons. I think social media is one factor that has assisted the problems. To me, the divisions in the Church have seemed to increase together the political divisions in the secular world; in many ways, I think the divisions in the

Church are more intense than in secular politics. This is a source of great sadness. I think these divisions need to be healed moving forward. However, I want to approach the issue with sobriety and therefore I have to admit I don't think it will be simple or easy. It honestly feels like the Church internally is in such a bad position to respond to all the Massive external problems that it is facing. I feel like much of the language being used by critics of the Holy Father Pope Francis is totally unacceptable. It makes me wonder what people really consider important to the Catholic faith, if not allegiance to and respect for the Pope? I have gained this real sense of division over the last few years and I can only imagine others have too (although there are clearly many people who are themselves unfazed by harsh language issued by people in different groups). I want to pray very much for the universal Church and to be a good person in my own parish and diocese. I hope those participating at the Plenary Council will make progress in addressing this problem.

My Faith was developed as a result of the teaching methods, beliefs and example given by the nuns of Mercy in my high school education. My mother defended her faith and our right to know about it by ensuring our attendance as the home was not able to provide this education. The nuns showed that once given the information, understanding, prayer and the way we lived our lives was the proof of that Faith. That we were reliant on ourselves and our belief in God and the truths of the Faith to live a good life.

I went to Church one day, and there was a young lady speaking at the end of the Mass. She was speaking about how she wanted to make a difference in the Church community and all over the world. She told an inspiring story about how when she was younger, her and her family weren't that faithful and religious when it came to God. One day, she wanted to figure out what was so great about God and faith and all that, so she went to Church. She was sucked in by the motivating words spoken by the priest. When she told this story I was immediately inspired by her story and her faith.

Apart from the way I was brought up as a cradle Catholic, what enhanced my life of faith was when I was introduced to the human Jesus ... how he made his responses to the everyday. As a result, I do not see my faith-life as one of religion, but one of community whose spirituality is foundational. What sickens me is the way our leaders exercise their status and responsibilities more out of cerebral attachment to law and less out of their deeper affection of Jesus' approach to life.

I went to a Catholic boarding school, in the 80's. It was close for me, but I am untouched, others in my year we're not so lucky. I am a hot blooded male like the rest of them. We are essentially animals and some animal instincts and behaviours remain. It is illogical that you can expect a male to refrain from a basic instinct for their whole life, it is just not real. So don't create an environment where failure is the standard, create an environment where love and sharing is the norm, i.e. family based priests of male and female genders.

I am, for only since Oct 1, 2017, sort of "surrendered" when I was invited to attend a home-religious gathering entitled "Ticket to Heaven" conducted by a Filipino priest by the name of Fr. [ - ], and just opened my heart and mind to the Spirit. I have been attending Sunday Mass since time immemorial, but the homily of some priests seem so out of date and irrelevant and not sufficient to have the effect. Anyway, I am now active in a small servant community—a lay

worker's group in the [ - ] area called [ - ]. The mission is to create an evangelising community of love. Thank you.

I reached rock bottom few years ago. Moved to Australia 5 years ago with my husband and our 4 kids. I started enjoying watching motivational speeches and listen to leaders. It helped to stand on my feet. After a while, I realised through my prayers that Jesus has said it all in the Bible. I felt that I can conquer the world with the strength of Jesus beside me. The feeling could never be described. Since then I try to help friends who are going through rough times too. I try to act Christian and to consider my Christianity a brand name to show off. We were blessed to have our 3 boys go to [ - ] Primary in [ - ] and our daughter goes to [ - ]. The support that these schools are giving us is overwhelming. My kids are learning the Christian values. Financially, the diocese of [ - ] is not letting us worry about the fees. I cannot describe how necessary that support is for our family to be able to stand up and do better in the near future.

I believe in our Church and the humanity of any ministers we are prone by our nature to make mistakes. I am lucky to have a good knowledge but as I mentioned before distance in Australia is a huge problem follow by language and unregistered poverty. I had a conversation with a Chinaman and told me that he could not afford to go to the Church because for his family was to expensive. Others had issue about distance in winter and foggy weather. Hard communication skill is also an issue. I am an old Italian. I tell you from the bottom of my heart that our field of believers are there but our Church is sleeping on the driver's seat in the name of God. I know that we are better than that. Ciao and God bless u.

I miss the respect given when one enters church—lack of silence and respect to the tabernacle where our Lord is. Growing up we never had conversations with others in church. You would genuflect when in front of the tabernacle and you prayed or sat in silence with the Lord.

Sadly, the faith in AUSTRALIAN Church is being watered down and compromised from within and as a result disappearing at alarming rates. My first encounter with the AUSTRALIAN Church was back in late 70's as part of RE class the priest asked all of us to sit down and talk about our personal experiences, nothing to do with teaching us our faith of which we were all ignorant. Of the priest was probably well intentioned but badly formed. Reflecting back on the experience, I never wanted to go back again to RE class because it had nothing to do with sharing authentic Catholic faith which calls us to repentance where we experience the mercy and love of our saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, where we experience authentic love and freedom.

I am divorced through no fault of mine in that it was not my choice. Am I considered an adulterer because I choose to remarry or find comfort from another man in the future? I feel guilty and rejected by my Church but not by God.

My husband and I have been members of the Couples for Christ since 1999, starting from Bangkok Thailand when our first child was just one year old. We are still active members of this community (now in Couples for Christ Australia CFCA) as we experienced spiritual growth as individuals and as a couple working together to fulfil God's will for us. We came to Australia in 2002 and joined the local CFCA shortly after. CFCA is highly instrumental in helping us keep our focus on Jesus as our Lord.

Yes, I have found it frustrating and frankly downright ill-mannered that the Diocesan office fails to acknowledge receipt of important emails and documents. This is typical and expected of a socialist-run government bureaucracy, not what one would expect from a supposedly Christian based organization.

I was disgusted seeing the bias ABC media coverage of Cardinal Pell and Archbishop Wilson. I was frustrated to see this in a once-Christian nation, abusing leaders of the Church for what they did according to the norm that existed 40-70 years ago and in conformity with section 316A (3) of Crimes Act 1900 and Royal Commissions recommendation to abolish the provisions of section 127 of Evidence Act 1995. (see attachment)

My story of experience is a long one. I have experienced:—loneliness and depression—struggles with Faith—struggles with family—struggles with trying to be a disciple of Christ amongst unbelievers—happiness beyond measure—miracles and strange phenomena (which I omit from this as having God in my life is phenomenal enough) I am a father of two young children and my beloved wife is due with our third in Feb 2019. It took me 37 years to learn how to pray, and therefore, how to be a Catholic among the Church. I've been part of three parishes in my life and have developed my love and life with God from all of them. Sometimes, some priests could bore me and my resolve would only be to go to one of the other parishes until that priest is not there. In priests, I seek advice on how to deal with people who do not have Faith, and people who doubt the Church. I am better at it now after 37 years of finally finding a great daily rhythm of living with the Lord. But others may be seeking the same from our earthly Fathers of Faith. I've attached a document I wrote years ago to help me form my mind. In it, chapter eight, are just a few personal experiences relating to encountering life with my Faith.

I have lived a life filled with some great tragedies, and was in a semi constant search of faith. When I attended a Mass one Easter I felt Jesus's presence for the first tangible time in my life and joined RCIA within a year. I did a 12-month programme and have never looked back. My husband recently converted of his own heart and the experience of our miracle baby and [ - ] helping us keep our desire to marry with Church approval was a true blessing.

I've definitely found a deeper growth in my Catholic spirituality through involvement in various ministries in my parish, through attending courses and Scripture reflection evenings offered through the Institute for Mission ([ - ] Diocese), and by being involved in "different" forms of worship (e.g. services involving more lively music than traditional hymns). I see these as an extension to Sunday Mass, not as a replacement. (There's no substitute for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist!)

I was born a Buddhist and baptised a Catholic because my husband's family was Catholic and they wouldn't have let me marry him had I not converted. But I think I'm a better Catholic than him and the way I practise is by talking to Jesus all the time. I thank him in My words not through the gazillion prayer cards his mother gives me. I don't believe in reciting prayers over and over again, except the rosary. I use the rosary when I really need a miracle, else I just simply talk to God. My father hates me because I converted and he doesn't speak to me much. I've tried to write to him about getting to know God and I didn't get a response ... but wasn't expecting one. I know God has a lot of his plate so I don't unnecessarily burden him. Last Sunday I knelt and as I asked my

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| <p>needs I looked at our community and realised they are all asking for something and I realised I felt so sorry for God as that's a Massive task ... but he is already there, at that difficult juncture waiting for us. So magically he covers us and protects us. I think Jesus is awesome! I'm a big fan of his but the way we do Church needs to change. I just wish my girls get to know him like I do. I hope my girls will marry good Catholic practising boys but I don't like my chances. I need a miracle for that so I better get the rosary out.</p> |
| <p>Going to Church on Christmas Eve, and learning the love of God.</p>  |
| <p>I believe something that has changed me as a Catholic was seeing the stations of the cross for the first time and seeing how much Jesus actually loves us.</p>   |
| <p>I have been in the Baptist Church my whole life and when I started going to a Catholic had changed that and I have found doubt in my belief in God. So I think that the Catholic Church is worse than the Baptist Church.</p>  |
| <p>I go to Church every Sunday that I can, it's a little over an hour's drive but I enjoy attending Church because I find it engaging and it makes me feel good about myself as well as improving my relationship with God.</p>   |
| <p>From the times that I have experienced Church in Australia, I have been especially bored during Mass.</p>  |
| <p>Yes, the Church so far has made me despise the Catholic religion as they just attempted to drill it into us, this was also influenced by the school I attend, the religion also holds us back I feel. Would write more teacher pressuring me.</p>  |
| <p>I have moved away from the Church and feel isolated in my faith as people in my life have been rejected from attending and participating fully in Mass due to divorce or sexual orientation</p>  |
| <p>My mother, as a long-standing member of the Church, has found herself disillusioned with the Church and its teachings because of the lack of support and openness to people from lifestyles that do not meet the traditional teachings of the Church. For me to watch a devout woman of the Church, slowly peel herself away from something that was such a big part of her life, is so telling of how the Church has lost its place in modern society.</p>  |
| <p>At present, I do not feel connected to the Church. I cannot relate.</p>  |
| <p>My experience is that the Church is aggressive and arrogant and not inclusive especially as it goes up the ladder. Schools have become corporatized and the business model prevails. Good will does not exist anymore.</p>   |
| <p>As an active member of my Catholic Church, seeing the rapid decline of young people and families coming to Church. We seem to be still serving the old parishioners. How can we involve the laity to drive the Church?</p>   |
| <p>I feel fortunate to be a part of a Catholic school and Church community who promote and encourage young people to be people of Jesus and deliver the message of the Gospel in their daily lives and actions. Rather than being people who judge or discriminate, the community constantly reflect upon ways in which we can spread the message of Jesus in a positive light. A big part of this</p>  |

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| <p>community is its inclusivity of those who are different. In Australia today I strongly believe that it is important for the Church and members of the Church be inclusive of all people.</p>   |
| <p>I have worked in a number of different religion-based schools. For me the strength of a Catholic Education for young people comes in the Gospel teachings and the strong sense of Social Justice—loving others as Christ loves us.</p>   |
| <p>My mother was raised Catholic and went to Church regularly as a child. Her teenage years were tumultuous and she began to drink, smoke and more. Because Church doctrine is against these actions, my mother no longer felt she deserved to be part of the Church community and believed she would not be welcomed. As such she stopped attending Church and although I was raised in the faith to some degree, my mother did not feel she could take me to Church as a child, I grew up without attending and do not feel that as an adult I would be welcomed as a new member.</p>                     |
| <p>I work with young people in a Catholic school who are increasingly disengaged with a Church that they see as no longer relevant, and worse than that, they see the Church as a negative institution which treats people badly. They exclude their divorced parents, their gay friends, they demonise the births of their brothers or sisters who were born through IVF and they dismiss their female friends who would like to be leaders of the Catholic Church. How can we expect our young people to want to follow a Church that is so opposed to the intentions of Jesus who included everyone?</p> |
| <p>I think some of the Church's rules and regulations no longer include what is going on in our society at this time.</p>   |
| <p>Nothing has killed my faith more quickly than working in Catholic schools and seeing executive staff use Church and school money extravagantly or wastefully rather than to help those who are needy. I've also seen the way that Catholic school leaders seem to care more about image than substance, running schools more like a company with a 'brand' than a community with a 'mission'.</p>  |
| <p>1. Contact with those that have suffered child sexual abuse-and their traumatised families. 2. Contact with students who are traumatised by the non-acceptance of their sexuality/gender issues.</p>   |
| <p>The child sexual abuse issues make my submission above as something necessary</p>  |
| <p>The exposure of and the response to the tragedies raised in the royal commission has angered me and alienated me from the Church. It has strengthened my faith in Jesus' emphasis on loving one another and honouring our God, and has highlighted to me my distrust and dislike of the Church, its doctrines and exclusivity. Hopefully those progressive voices within the Church will be heard and the true emphasis of Jesus' teaching will once again become our focus.</p>   |
| <p>I am Catholic. I am becoming very disenchanted with the Catholic Church and what it now represents. I have seen very little evangelisation and in my opinion if it was not for the local nuns the Church in my area would have very few parishioners. I feel that the Church needs to significantly change to provide spiritual comfort and create a vibrant future.</p>   |
| <p>When my daughter passed away suddenly this year, I was angry and inconsolable to the point that I was questioning God. I came to an event where I met a missionary who after hearing my story, reminded me that we live in a 'fallen world' where bad things happen to good people and if I can</p>  |

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| <p>see beyond my grief, God has greater plans. I felt embarrassed for being angry in the first place. I am still grieving and will be for the rest of my life, but my faith has been my great companion and healer.</p>   |
| <p>Special mention to Father [ - ] of [ - ] parish in [ - ] some 5 years ago. I found myself and more importantly kids and teenagers actually looking forward to attending Mass because he was for real, his homily was animated and relevant to the times, he was touching lives, hearts, minds of people who otherwise just attend Mass for the sake of. PRIESTS assigned to specific demographics are more effective, study the population and what issues or challenges people are facing in their daily lives when assigning priests.</p>  |
| <p>Being educated in a Catholic school run by nuns and suffering because one is poor doesn't do much for ones faith in the religious.</p>   |
| <p>I went to Catholic schools for my schooling and did not get much education in the faith. I was taught in religion class that St Paul was the founder of the Catholic Church. The priest was virtually invisible at my Catholic high school—Mass once a term and no confession.</p>   |
| <p>Ever since I was a child, I was taught about our Father in Heaven and our Lord Jesus Christ, but I never truly felt his power and presence until I joined my youth ministry. Since then, I've felt His grace in my life to lead me to where He wants me to be; I've never felt more fulfilled.</p>   |
| <p>Without getting too specific, throughout my life Jesus (through the Church) has always been there for me, in good times and in bad. I truly have been blessed. I wish that gift for everyone.</p>  |
| <p>My experience in a Catholic Church has shaped me to become a better person. Faith is shown throughout Mass and the priests' adaptation to modern society within their homilies has allowed me to understand what is being said.</p>  |
| <p>When attending Mass at our Church, the congregation doesn't kneel when you are supposed to. When you attend other parishes they do kneel. So I think all Churches should be consistent and go back to old ways and kneel.</p>  |
| <p>I have found myself wanting to know more and learn more because of close friends leaving the Church. I originally want to know if I should leave too. The more I learnt the stronger my faith became.</p>  |
| <p>I had a secret friendship with a high clerical member, and it bore lots of fruit in that I was able to do much of Gods work in and out of the diocese. Without having to broadcast it like the hypocrites our Lord speaks of.</p>  |
| <p>I was born and baptised into the Catholic Church. I went to Catholic schooling for 12 years. Growing up I never had any relationship with God. I would only find myself at Church when family was getting married or baptism etc. I would go to Sunday Mass when I felt like it. I was not catechised properly. So I got involved with Satan from a very, very young age especially regarding sins against purity. Sin became second nature to me and I thought it was normal. Everything around me was saying it was normal. As I grew older the effects started to build up within me. I went through severe depression, anxiety and it got to rock bottom where I truly believed that life was not worth living any more. No matter how much drugs I took or alcohol I drank it could not</p> |

permanently take away the pain and guilt within me. At age 22, someone close to me recommended that I go to Confession. Do not ask me how but I found myself for the first time in my life with a priest face to face about to confess. It was very daunting because I never knew how it worked and about the "seal". So I was there for a very long time until I finally let everything out. I was expecting the priest to call the police but he reacted the way he is supposed to react as though he has heard it all before. He did not judge me. He helped me to make a good Confession. After I said my act of contrition and the priest said the final absolution prayer my life changed literally dramatically radically. After he said those words of Absolution I felt so at peace so free I knew that all was forgiven. I had experienced true Mercy and Love for the first time in my life. True love that cannot be found in the material pleasures of this world. I walked out of there saying a prayer to God that from this moment I live for you. I will change my selfish life at all cost. I started to learn about the Catholic Faith and could not believe some of its teachings especially the Real Presence. I was an under nourished soul inside a 22 year old body thirsting for truth. I am now 31 years old and still cannot get enough. There is still great healing to be done but I trust in God.

Within my current parish and those I have previously attended, I have appreciated the generous commitment to an authentic Christian life as practised by priests, religious and lay people. Heartfelt homilies, acts of kindness and encouragement to do the best within our humanity have provided good support. Sadly separate from this Christian example, I have over decades been aware of the shadow of then children affected by sexual abuse. The people I knew were unable or chose not to come forward, nonetheless these events significantly affected their lives. These effects rippled on to families and friends who witnessed the hardship, mental suffering and lost opportunities for those effected. I pray on behalf of those individuals scared and damaged by sexual abuse within the Church that a vigilant and compelling commitment is made to protect the safety of all children within the Church organisations.

An experience that has shaped me was definitely the Australian Catholic Youth Festival; as I met new people and shared experiences with God and others around me.

My Maronite Catholic identity is strong and our bishop is not wishy-washy or confused us about true Church teaching. Even though some topics are hard to listen to (gay marriage, abortion etc.), it still makes sense and this is when I can start LOVING others with a cross they are bearing. I wish Catholic in Australia can be excited about our faith and have educators tell them the hard truth of certain topics but encourage this "radical love" and lead them to Him.

I have been impressed by the dedication of our parish priest and this has helped me return to Church. I also trust him with my donations and I am sure that they go to the right people.

I have been fortunate to be amongst people who have not been shy to speak of their spiritual experiences. For 40 years, I have been recipient of the best of Scripture and Spiritual formation where my mind was opened, not being afraid to let go of black and white thinking. Now I find I am faced with a multitude of Catholic who cannot stomach opening their minds to the best of Scripture education, and have themselves entrenched in 'Church teaching/catechism' mentality as the ultimate guide for life rather than having the gospel Jesus as the one to follow. It seems that 'change' is a concept and practice that should be shunned.

I simply love my Catholic Church in Australia and all over the world, it defines me as Christ defines me and that is why you must take my submission very seriously

Funnily enough, one of the standout experiences I feel has shaped me as an Australian Catholic is an experience I had at another Christian Church, which was not Catholic. I attended a LifeHouse Church Mass in [ - ] Victoria (Now based in [ - ], VIC) a few years ago with some relatives, while staying with them to attend a family wedding. (I am from NSW). They invited us to come to Mass with them to share the experience. I must say, being a Catholic all my life, I was sceptical about their 'religion' and attended with a closed mind, adamant that I would not be swayed to change my beliefs. Upon arrival, we were greeted warmly and with genuine joy. Everyone seemed so genuinely happy to see us and we felt very welcomed and embraced by this small community of people. Once the Mass began, it felt like a more intimate and engaging experience than I have ever felt at any Catholic Mass I have ever attended, and I couldn't help feeling the sharp parallel with my usual Mass experience, as well as the engagement of those around me. It made me instantly feel there was something genuine and important about the speaker's words, and I immediately wanted to listen intently to every word. The main message was from a Bible passage; however, it was mostly spoken about in a way that drew correlations with everyday life with this Bible passage to make it so relatable, in a way that everyone would easily understand. And with such enthusiasm that it made me sit up and listen. Everything felt so true and real and in that instant I could see the message with such clarity. There was also, modern singing about the love of God, by an onstage band that almost brought tears to my eyes, seeing the love these people had for Jesus and their fellow man in the community. The smiles on their faces and everyone else's were undeniable. Today's Church needs more enthusiasm, more upbeat music and a modern take on the readings and gospel to help people connect with the readings. Once people come in and sit down it is so easy to get comfortable and become disengaged with the 'hum-drum' formality of doing the same thing, saying the same words, standing and kneeling and sitting at the specified times, etc. without actually thinking about what we are there for. A bit of excitement, and enthusiasm during the Masses will do wonders to keep people engaged and allow the message to actually sink in, and stop young people turning away from the Church. I am 44 and although I do not consider myself so young, I think it would be great. Another noteworthy point also, I have a friend who is at a very low point in her life. She is not religious at all and does not practice any particular religion. I feel faith in God could really help her. I would love to bring her to Mass to experience God's all-encompassing love that I have learnt over the years, but the way the Masses are at the moment, I would be hesitant. She won't get that experience at a Mass. I am ashamed to say but I would not to bring her.

I was brought up in a wonderful family environment with seven siblings. My parents were both born in Malta and shared their faith with us, and we attended our local parish often through the week. When I was 7, we stopped attending our local parish and started attending one nearby, where the priest, Fr [ - ], was known for his deep faith and loyalty to the teachings of the Church. He helped me grow individually in my faith through his clear and interesting homilies, along with the regular reception of the sacraments and adoration of the Blessed Eucharist. I became very involved in the parish as an altar server and acolyte, also assisting with choir, youth groups and the Legion of Mary. When I met my now wife in the parish he guided us, along with other couples,

in preparing well for our marriage, again clearly outlining for us the beauty of the teachings of the Church in the areas of chastity, fidelity and mutual love. This held us in good stead in the lead up to the big day, and through the 17 years since then. When we settled into our new home in another parish, we were once again blessed with a wonderful priest, Fr [ - ], who welcomed us and walked with us and our four children (as they arrived) in nurturing our faith, both individually and collectively. Of particular note are, (1) his method of preparing our children for the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation, an intense catechesis which formed our children in their understanding of the faith, while also providing parents and older siblings an opportunity to renew and review our understanding as we accompanied them, (2) his reverence and love for the Eucharist, and (3) his generosity in supporting those on the margins, within our own parish, our country, and globally.

My faith is my own and has little to do with the Church. I am one of the biggest cynics of the Church, not just in Australia, but around the world. However this hasn't, in anyway, diminished my faith or my belief in God ... it's just that I don't believe I need you, the Church as the institution, and what it has come to represent! Respect is earned, not given!

I frequently experience the deep and God-centred spirituality of all classes of people, who at the same time are disenchanted with the Church's inability to conceive that the Spirit speaks to them in many events of their lives.

I go to Church, I pray daily, I read the Bible daily and I am a sinner. I have seen what God has done for me he continues to pick me up every time I fall. I feel his presence and know that he and our Lady are with me. But I have become more aware with our Mass is being done and how it was done before. I looked closely at the changes that was made which I haven't done before and it saddens me to see how men are slowly destroying the Church and it will not get better until the day comes when our Lord and Saviour will take back his throne.

My friend committed suicide by what was done to them. But of course you denied it blamed it on the child. You have no remorse only to protect your corrupt Church.

I attended Catholic schools all my life and was a Sunday Mass attendee for 24 years of my life. I was searching for God and His truth. Being an ex-Dominican student the motto Veritas was my cry of the heart. In 1984, after much personal pain and anguish due to family issues I had a sovereign encounter with the living God at a Conference called 'He's Alive' run by the Servants of Jesus Community. My life was transformed as I had found what I was looking for the Lord. I had come home so to speak and the love and mercy of God had become a reality to me, the Scriptures, the teachings of the Church became my life. God breathed His Holy Spirit into my life like never before. This encounter was the start of a new life for me. Sadly, in the parish where I grew up there was no one to support me and my new hunger for God. It was only through my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Servants Of Jesus Covenant Community and all the formation I have received in this community over the many years have I come to understand my Catholic faith, the Good News of Jesus and the beauty of the Scriptures. I married my husband also a fellow member of this community. We are committed Catholic and Christians and we serve our brothers and sisters in the Lord and in our wider community. It is a great sadness to me that other Catholics and Christians in our Great Country do not have the riches I have experienced. We intercede for all the

people in Australia to receive Christ as their Lord and Saviour. This needs to be put into place by we committed Christians taking the Gospel to the marketplace, our schools, our workplaces, our parishes.

I remember the night my mother took me to midnight Mass at Christmas time when I was 7 years old. As I walked up the hill to the Church, I was struck at the joy of this Mass. Ever since then and from a tender age, I have always attended Sunday Masses no matter where in the world I was. As the years rolled on and I grew up to embrace the world and its temptations, the Church became less important to me but I still kept up the practice of Sunday Masses. I could not tolerate clerical hegemony and one day when a bishop came up to me and told me that I had no respect for the clergy, I replied that he got that one right. It was not until 6 years ago when I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with our then parish priest, that my spiritual batteries were renewed. Something happened to me when I touched the waters of the Jordan River and I said to myself "From now on I walk with Jesus Christ". That was my defining moment. I still walk with him and not necessarily with the clergy.

Fr [ - ] would have Bible classes on Wednesday nights at [ - ] this had an impact on me.

As a young adult, just going to Mass seemed pointless. I felt God's presence but the Mass itself was a one act play with minor variations each time. I had no idea of how to read the Bible or even where to begin. It was daunting. I had no idea of where the three readings at Sunday Mass fitted into the Bible and so had no way of connecting God's activities in human history. It seemed nice but pointless. So as a young adult I began to read Spiritual Books by modern writers. The first book that really stood out for me was 'God of Surprises' by Fr. Gerald Hughes. Bit by bit God drew me closer until today I can truly say my most important relationship is with God. Unfortunately, in talking to other young Catholic over the years, many have either had to find God for themselves over a long confusing period of time until He found them, or they go to Church 'because you're supposed to' or they go for social reasons only. These last two groups are the most spiritually vulnerable. We need to arm all spiritual searchers with knowledge and truth and pray that God will give them wisdom and understanding and draw them to His Dear Sweet Self.

Doctrine classes (not watered down and well-explained) were held in our parish when I was in my early twenties as a preparation for WYD2018. I always thought that opened up so much for me and started my journey on faith. I wondered why nobody ever taught me this when I was younger. Growing up in a charismatic group I always felt that what was being taught was very watered down. Praise and worship was not my thing and I wanted a real engagement with our Lord. Our parish priest in Rooty Hill (before I moved house) was very helpful with the youth giving talks and much of his time—which I greatly appreciate. Attending spiritual means of formation given by priests of Opus Dei has helped so much my own growth even until now.

Recently my wife and I came together with a group of friends for lunch and set time aside to discuss our relationship to God and the Church. People in this group have been friends for over 35 years. We first came together as members of a Church group, which gathered regularly to read scripture and try and apply it to our lives. At that time, we would have all been regular Churchgoers and had young families we hoped would follow in our footsteps in the practice of their Catholic faith. Practically none of our children or grandchildren goes to Mass regularly today.

The group is evenly split between those who attend Mass regularly each Sunday and those who don't. However, all seem to continue to value their relationship with Christ if not with the Catholic Church. All were critical of the Church in some ways and not just in relationship to the revelations of sexual abuse. One couple in particular, both of whom had divorces before they married each other, were hurt by the Catholic Church's treatment of them as divorced people. The impression I had from the discussion was that it is the kindness of individuals, including priests, and their sense of belonging within their own local Church which keeps them in anyway attached to the Church. On the other hand, it is all the old authoritarianism and clericalism made to look hypocritical by the revelations of sexual abuse and its cover-up, which has pushed them away.

World Youth Day Sydney 2008 was the key to reignite the Catholic Church in Australia. The Holy Spirit really came upon me and continues to work through me to help me bring others closer to Christ, especially within youth ministry. I truly am blessed to have said that "Yes" to participate actively in my faith. I pray that the Catholic Church in Australia remains strong in her teaching and honestly listens to the Holy Spirit.

My personal experience of faith: I was bought up in the Church. My mother instilled in us, her daughters a love of Mother Mary and going to Mass daily and each weekend. I had thought that my vocation might be that of a nun. I had a desire to go to the missions. My mother and fathers marriage was not good and finally ended in divorce when I was 21. I was extremely angry with my father and bore very deep bitterness toward him for not being the Father that my sisters and I needed and wanted. As I grew through my teenage years, I still went to Mass and prayed my usual prayers to Mother Mary. I did not become a nun but married my husband, a Lutheran, in the Catholic Church. My mother remarried outside of the Church and I felt my faith shake she was my role model. Estranged from my father for a number of years, we had word that he was dying of cancer. I was 29 years old. My sisters and I attended a Charismatic Mass. We sat and cried together as if our Father were already deceased. People were praying in groups for healing. I went to one of these groups and told them my Father was dying and then I had such a sense of emptiness. God knows what my father needs, I need Jesus. I experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was set free from hatred bitterness and resentment. Changed renewed and born again in Jesus. It was Good Friday. I realized I was a sinner in need of a saviour. Suffice to say the miracle I was expecting for my father to be healed of cancer was actually the miracle of reconciliation with my father, my father and mother and my sisters. For years, I had justified my bitterness and resentment of dad even going to Holy Communion in that state. My self-righteousness did not allow me to see myself as a sinner in need of a saviour. I believe that it was through the intercession of Mother Mary which led me to her son. My life belongs to God, my Will belongs to God. And with Mary, I pray be it done unto me according to your word!

I was brought up in a faith-filled immigrant family in which attendance of Sunday Mass was important, together with the recitation of the Rosary every night. Novenas and Missions also played an important part and, to this day, my faith is very central to my life.

My experience is that when it comes to the Catholic Church, you have the best and the worst. You have the best intellectual tradition in the history of humanity, and then find it is entirely neglected by many educators and in homilies. You have examples of unparalleled self-sacrifice and virtue in her priests, and then find that there are Judases standing next to them. You have the greatest art

work in the world, and then go to a typical parish where a mangled piece of metal stands in the place of the crucifix. You have the most beautiful and rich liturgies, and then find it almost impossible to avoid liturgical abuse on a Sunday. This is my experience of the Church. This is why she is the vehicle of the greatest joy in the world, but also why the self-sabotage of some of her members is the most painful thing in the world.

When I was in yr 11, I went to the Immaculata Mission school for the first time. It was a 14-day retreat run by the Sisters of the Immaculata and we had daily holy hours, prayed the rosary, listened to many talks, went street evangelisation and door knocking, observed times of silence and still managed to play games and do fun activities as well. As a shy person, I found it challenging to talk to others and especially when I went door knocking. But everyone was so welcoming and charitable that upon reflection, I realised I'd found a pocket of hope in a world of despair. It changed my life because although I knew God loved me intellectually having been taught this at school, at the retreat, I truly felt His love in my heart. It was the love and charity everyone had for each other and for me that touched me and helped me to see and tangibly feel God's love for me.

I feel my continued commitment to my faith is encouraged by my work environment. I work at a Catholic school and each day I witness the power of Catholic beliefs through actions.

Well I was never a very Faithful person actually the opposite ... I grew up with drug dealers and was a drug taker... My conversion happened at a silent retreat and ... I have now been attending daily Mass for over 15 years. I have been spiritual coordinator of the youth of my parish and social coordinator for events and many other roles in the past. Now I am a father of 4 beautiful children and help many people come back to the Faith. Godfather of 1 atheist and 1 Muslim and soon to be by the grace of God another Godfather to a Muslim girl who wants to be baptised. My journey wasn't easy but I never gave up hope and my Holy mother and her precious beads helped me along the way. I led the biggest group of youth when Our Holy Pope came to Australia out of every parish in Australia, it was an amazing experience life changing.

I live in [ - ] where there is a large Muslim community. They have been reaching out to others for a number of years, inviting them to activities held at their mosque. I would like to be able to invite them to suitable functions organised by the Catholic Church. This could be as simple as having morning tea together. Conversation on a topic of mutual interest encourages understanding. In my few encounters with the Muslim women, I have been very impressed with their warmth and their faith in our loving God.

Nothing to mention. I am a disappointed Catholic. Trying hard to keep my faith in spite of the scandals in the Church. I am so saddened by the way the local bishop misguided people during the same sex marriage debate and continuing to do so even now.

Both daily Mass and Antioch were instrumental in my developing a faith of my own when I finished High school. I felt that I belonged to the Church Community through both these areas. Also learning to play guitar for Mass. After youth group, a Catholic Charismatic Community has formed me and taught me (more than I've learnt at Mass or anything the local parish offers).

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| <p>I have seen in other cities where parishes offer morning/evening Mass in conjunction with other parishes, people are returning to be nourished by the Blessed sacrament. I was very moved to see 1st Friday adoration being so popular and frequented by young people praying for vocations. Also where sacramental programs included parent faith formation.</p>  |
| <p>I have lucky to have had involvement with various different groups where we look at our faith and share our experiences in small groups and I have found this has helped me with my development, we need to advertise these opportunities more openly</p>  |
| <p>I wish to attach a communique by Bishop [ - ]released in 13th of September 2017. As the plenary council is in full swing I would like to comment on few matters regarding the Church future. The SODOMITE agenda or the LGBTQ movement which being pushed very aggressively through the Church and the ECUMENICAL movement which is a cancer to the Church promulgated by the Second Vatican Council which has made the Church follow the EVILS the world stoop very low in its standard. The SATANIC ONE WORD GOVERNMENT is being preached from all the pulpits of most so called Christian Churches today. The Catholic Church should go back to PRE VATICAN II and hold to its values and morals, not let the winds of MODERNISM take hold of it. Secularization and the SODOMITE agenda are a BIG EVILS of modern times, which the Church guard itself from. Salvation can only come by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER BUT BY HIM.</p> |
| <p>I am a 'cradle Catholic' and I have loved the Church my whole life, but as a woman, I find the lack of involvement for women within ministries of the Church frustrating and painful. We are in a crisis and yet it seems that 'we just carry on as usual' -but something radical has to happen for these crises to be worked through. Being an exclusive Church is not the Church of Jesus Christ.</p>  |
| <p>Jesus is the only human to call himself God. None of the other Prophets called themselves God. So, He is either a liar, a mad man or who he says He is.</p>  |
| <p>I have been going to [ - ] school for girls since I was 5. I have been brought up from the first day of kindergarten to love the faith, and follow the Catholic Church. However in year 9, I left to [ - ] College for a term. When at [ - ], I learnt less of my faith, and wasn't surrounded by the love I had at [ - ]. Gaining more knowledge about my faith from a non-Catholic school rather than a Catholic school really shocked me. I decided to go back to [ - ], as I missed the love and kindness I was surrounded by constantly. [ - ] has strengthened my faith, and taught me to become the Catholic I am today.</p>  |
| <p>[ - ] parish in [ - ] offers 6am Mass and this has helped me greatly to adore Our Lord before getting into the hustle and buzzle of the day. Living the Mass has helped me to be a better Christian and I believe if more parishes offered more early Masses, it will help more people adore Our Lord.</p>   |
| <p>Being part of a sharing and caring community has kept me going to Church.</p>  |
| <p>For 75 years I've resided in the [ - ] parish and have seen the Mass, reduced from 4 Masses to 3 and the 6pm and 7.30am Masses are lucky to have a 100 parishioners at each.</p>   |
| <p>*We need to encourage our young people to the ministries so they can be involved by working. The data projector, the presentation of gifts, the collection etc. *Young people need to be able to see a reason for going to Church. *We need to find ways to involve the youth in the celebrations</p>  |

and the preparation at Church. \*Ask them to assist with planning and offer suggestions to the way they can be involved in the Church. \*Advertise children's / youth Mass through local Primary school, the catechists and the local Catholic High school. \*The older youth can minister the younger children It could be three time a year and culminate with Children's / Youth Mass at Christmas. \*We need to find ways to make the Church is appealing to younger generations It needs to be relevant while still keeping traditions alive In our parish the majority of people are 50+ it is very sad that the young the youth and the young adults are just not coming. We need a revival of Prayer as people have forgotten how to prayer and some people have only their primary school examples of prayer and they won't pray because they don't know how. \*The clergy MUST be seen to have greater interaction with the children around the school and Church be part of the fun be visible this will see the attitudes change. As a faith filled Christian community, we must learn from other Christian denominations on how to attract the youth to the Church. Targeting children at their level and not forcing them to fit adult faith.

One of the most important events in my faith development was one of the outcomes of Vatican II, when it helped replace the 'fear of hell' with the love of God. The love of God is our driving source in our daily lives but it is often overlooked and ignored by the materialistic and monetary demands at all levels of Church. Another experience which had an effect on my faith development was Dr [ - ] (Catholic Uni. [ - ]) where the Mystery of Christ was explored and discussed. This experience opened my mind and heart to that Mystery which wraps and encompasses 'what and why we believe. It is that Mystery that is encompassed in what we know is the 'Source and Summit of our Faith'—the Mass where praise and thanksgiving is given to the Almighty God through Jesus Christ—this is where I experience my faith and love of the Triune God

I'm 71 and on November 9, 2012 received the donor cells for a bone marrow transplant for chronic leukaemia. An expensive medication, available when the CLL became active again and available on compassionate grounds has led to being in remission. As a child, we were taught to say the Morning Offering. It is a prayer alluded to by Bruce Dawe in his poem Homo Suburbienis: the common man and offering up instead Not much but as much as any man can offer—time, pain, love, hate, age, war, death, laughter, fever. The poem struck a chord with me when I taught it as part of the selection of Dawe poems for the HSC. Offering up all that having leukaemia for the last 13 years has meant, and what the transplant has entailed, has been a way of drawing something valuable out of the experience. It has guided me to trust and find meaning. I added a few words of my own to the prayer. Loving God I offer you the prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day: that someone may be able to love, that someone may be able to forgive, that someone may be able to turn from evil, that someone maybe healed, that someone may be able to pray. A member of Father Richard Rohr's team, James Finlayson, speaking about Thomas Merton's offering of his chronic insomnia to God, kindled my belief in our connection with each other around the world and the value of such prayer. So it was with consternation and overwhelming emotion that I read #279 of Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*. Here, from a leader that I feel strong connection with, were such uplifting, hopeful optimistic, encouraging words. No single act of love for God will be lost, no generous effort is meaningless, no painful endurance is wasted. All these encircle our world like a vital force ... It may be that the Lord uses our sacrifices to shower blessings in another part of the world that we will never visit.

The fact that it failed to account for the mythologies of the other Empires of the Middle East both in its teaching and the various redactions of the Old and New Testaments. In fact, my first experience was this. I was walking down the aisle to Communion when I thought this is only magic. The priest says the magical words and the Immutable God changes his mind and turns into a thin wafer of 'bread'. With that I turned left, went out the side door, drove half way home and remembered that I had left the baby in a basket beside the pew!

The seven ladies in our group all told stories of faith. With the exception of one, they all told stories of praying to Our Lady and asking for help in matters regarding family problems with children or finances and in every case Our Lady helped them and solved a difficult problem. One lady prayed to Blessed Don Alvero with a group of friends. They prayed for the cure of [ - ] from MS which has no cure. They prayed and a couple of months later [ - ] was completely cured and her eyesight which she had partially lost came back to normal. The optometrist said this was impossible.

I am edified by the very cheerful disposition and dedication of the former parish priests of [ - ]— [ - ] (Father [ - ]). They are both retired now. Father [ - ] was parish priest I think in the years around 2012 and Father [ - ] in 2014? He is in the retirement place now in Harris Park. They were both very effective parish priests—hardworking, fatherly and faithful.

Vatican II was approved when I was in high school. I came home one afternoon and there was not one holy picture left in my family home. We had no religious, moral or ethical direction at the Catholic school I attended and everything became secular. By the time I left school I had no spiritual or moral formation. Thankfully, the following year I encountered a spiritual group that guided and protected me and help me deepen in my faith. Although demanding, this encounter changed my life. I was yearning for the direction I never received. As a consequence I have a quality marriage, a large family with all my children practicing their faith. My husband and I brought them up in the faith and taught them prayers, acts of piety, gave them rules and taught them Church teachings. The result has been that all my children are practicing Catholics doing a great job in society and with their own families. I had much to overcome as a child with parents who divorced and the consequences of living in a dysfunctional family. My siblings neither practice nor my mother. It is such a pity. The Church has much to answer for.

\* I am ever so grateful that there are young men and women from my children's school and from my parish who have listened to God's call to become priests and Religious Brothers and Sisters. They are wonderful role models for my children and give Australia plenty of hope in the future of the Catholic Church in Australia. \* Growing up in Malaysia, we had Sunday school after Mass every week. There would be a potluck lunch after Mass, followed by small, age-related groups who would gather around the grounds of the Church to learn about the catechism. The adults had groups as well as the children so all received formation no matter what their age or stage in life. \* Having attended Youth Group throughout my High school career in Australia, there were people who were able to help me along my faith journey. Once I started work and got married there was hardly anything on offer for that age range, until my eldest started at an Independent Catholic school. Through my children's school community, we now have so many families who are helping each other out to live as faithful Catholic. \* Through this community, my faith and understanding is formed through weekly/monthly talks by priests, religious, Opus Dei members formed in the

catechism as well as people of all ages who have been through or are going through difficulties that we encounter. \* After having my baby, the school community came together to cook meals for us for the first 3 weeks. \* Families regularly meet together for a meal then pray the rosary. \* Families celebrate All Saints Day with a feast, trivia, dressing up as saints, we sing songs and show our children what a wonderful message of hope we have in the Catholic Church.

When I was 19 or 20, I shared a half a house with a girlfriend. I had this dream while I was in bed and my girlfriend had gone to work and left the back door open—this she had done before—and I could not go back to sleep cause I worked night cleaning. I heard noises, I tried to get up and the blankets were so heavy, I could see this really bright light in the hallway I called out ... no one answered. I tried again to rise out of the blankets and sort of wiggle out the top, next I was balancing on the end of the bed with the brightness still coming through the doorway. I fell to the ground and struggled to the doorway and fell over the threshold into the light. I thought I saw Jesus and felt a peaceful feeling, woke up in bed. Later that day going to work, I thought about the dream what it meant. Well a lot of my friends were getting into heroin. I had avoided it for years and just smoked pot. Sometimes I'd say something and they would say "oh you know nothing about it" so I tried it and thought of it an ego trip and was something I could live without. I was worried for my friends cause I could not help them, I had to save myself. I prayed for them and myself at Mass. This dream was telling me that I was 6 foot under—that my life was in the balance that I would have to struggle to light. I amazingly survived thanks to Our Lord Jesus' love for me.

I love the People of God from any faith and or spirituality. I love talking about our experiences of the Spirit of God who is Love; sharing our stories of this yearning for unity; oneness with all of creation. I love my own faith tradition, the Body of Christ as experienced in the Catholic Church. The Church has been my guide throughout my 77 years. It is amazing to me where the loving invitations and my "yeses" have taken me. How did I get to Australia from a small, tribal, coal-mining town in SW Pennsylvania? A long and winding road ... I started teaching in the Church when I was 12; was asked to write a lesson plan for each class I taught children who were 7. My whole spiritual life seems to have centred on lesson planning. I love the whole preparation in which the creative Spirit of God has hold of me. I am captured in the process and the surprises are a delight to me. And the beat goes on. My joy now is sharing wisdom as an elder in the community. We must claim and pass on this wisdom to our children's and grandchildren's generations. The world is theirs and we are the bridge. It is my desire to continue growing in the Spirit of Love till my last breath.

I feel betrayed that I was deprived of knowing Catholicism for most of my life. My poor mother thought that I was being catechised at school. Since my conversion every single Holy Communion leaves me thrilled, shaking with unbelief that that has happened to me. Thank God that I met faithful laity who led me to reality. God bless the good and holy priests and consecrated souls who are keeping things going.

I have a niece in another Diocese and she is a very committed Catholic and Christian, having one to many WYDs and been a Diocesan delegate as a young person. She recently married a man who had been divorced and subsequently baptised in another Church, having never been a Catholic. He has since become a full member of the Church. They were married outside the Church until an annulment came through and they recently took their vows as full members of the Church.

However, I did not think that the Church (or her PP) was supportive of this initial marriage and it is difficult for people especially those not members of the Church, and indeed myself, to understand why the Church needs to take such archaic action, and to not be compassionate about such situations. Such practises as these do nothing in helping people want to belong to the Church. My niece is one of the few who want to be married in the Church and she is Spirit-filled as is her husband. Not many young people would go through such a process. At the time I was upset with the priest for the way he handled the situation, not being caring or understanding, and I think if I were not a committed Christian myself, may have walked away. For me, God is the way and I do not hold the Clerics as all-knowing and "God like". What I am saying is that I accept that priests are human and not always showing love and compassion as Jesus would, and I do not base all my beliefs on what they do or say. However, other people may be turned away by what they see as harsh attitudes, and this has happened too much in the Church.

I have been brought up and raised in a Catholic, practicing family. My Faith became more personal for me after going on youth retreats and being involved in youth groups and learning more about the beauty of the teachings of our Faith. It was through deepening my knowledge of the Church's teachings that I came to appreciate my Faith more and this drew me much closer to God. My Faith is no longer about just going to Church because it's just the normal thing to do in our family life, but about persevering and deepening my relationship with God. It was on retreat that I discovered the treasure of Adoration and this has made an incredible impact on my life. Each and every person needs to know how deeply loved they are by God, their creator. We can only share God's love if it has become a part of our lives; and is alive in our hearts. Especially in today's society, where so many people are broken and are in desperate need of God's healing love, do we need to be able to bring the Truth, mercy and healing of God's love to those around us. We can just 'move with the times', because truth doesn't change over time. Rather the Faithful need to have more opportunities to discover the beauty of the truths and teachings of the Church, so that we can be a light and a hope to everyone around us. We need to have more opportunities to enable us to deeper encounter God's tender Love, so that we'll be set on fire with the Love that never dies and is always faithful, only then can the Fire of God's love be spread.

It has happened again and again that we get asked to participate in parish or diocesan assemblies. We pool our collective thoughts and wisdom, and again and again, we are stifled by the excuse 'that's not Church teaching' as if we cannot review or challenge it. You wonder why we get asked to participate when all along there are these set boundaries that cannot be questioned. Such an event may not appear to be an experience of faith, but it has struck at the heart of my trust in myself as a thinking and prayerful being who is primarily equipped with the gifts of the Spirit as any ecclesiastic, and hence to be included in the circle with equal voice. Is there any way that the Australian Church leadership can show its prophetic stand during this Council; to take up the disposition of Jesus in challenging law/Church-teaching that compromises the dignity of shared power and missionary call? As a Church educator, I have often been afraid to challenge a bishop (or his colleagues) on some matter of address or issue. This fear has led me to be unidentified in my communication for fear that I would be told by my pastor that I am now persona non grata. This surely is a poor state of affairs. What kind of a Church does fear-inducement suggest? To witness theologians and the like to be treated with indignity with no attempt to engage in

conversation with them about what they write flies in the face of their call to speak and be prophetic. The reaction of the Vatican to reprimand them without any due process must indicate fear on the Vatican's part. Where is the trust and collaboration in thinking things through? This has only fuelled my questioning my membership as a Catholic. The whole tone of authority in our Church hardly nurtures an affection for life as Catholic. Yet, what would be seen as the cruellest manifestation of maltreatment of the body of Christ—if only it was to be brought out into the public discourse— is the continued ban on ex-priests to participate in liturgical ministry. This is a denial of their baptism and a violation of what Jesus stands for. How can such continued violation of dignity persist? Is it not time to look brutally and honestly at such treatment and behaviour that is not consonant with what Jesus was on about? It almost seems that Church teaching trumps what the Gospel reveals. This I continue to find as an obstacle in nourishing faith. What I notice in those with whom I commune in faith, that when such an inverted approach is adopted, what ensues is a rigidity and defensiveness toward any invitation to fellowship for change, growth and enrichment of faith. I continue to find it difficult to be in a Church with leadership that cannot expand its mentality from governing with correctness and certitude toward forming themselves in the nature and vision of Jesus of Nazareth. Herein lies our map for leadership; not to fear voices that challenge the Church, and engage the *sensus fidelium* with love and trust. How Gospel!

I am a young father of three who had positive experiences of Church and youth groups. I'd like to see a Church in ten years' time that my children feel they 'fit' into. It speaks a language we don't even know exists yet through technology and lay inspiration.

1. I work at a school where we are blessed to have a chapel and Mass every day. I take care of the chapel and for the last 3 years have been trying in vain to substitute our torn and over used lectionary. I believe that the Gospel deserves more respect! 2. I have been told by many parents that they are disappointed by the lack of religion classes in Catholic schools. The true Catholic doctrine should be taught all Catholic schools and universities and be not afraid of persecution from the people who do not want to conform to the faith. 3. God was very clear in his creation, man and woman he created them to procreate, anything else is unnatural and shouldn't be celebrated anywhere near or in Catholic Churches or schools. 4. Jesus gathered his chosen 12, all men, and founded the first Mass with the apostles as priests. I am sure that if Jesus wanted women as priests he would have chosen women as apostles as well even in a men dominant world of those times!

My faith has been strengthened by the influence of convinced and good people whether Church going or not. The interaction with other faith expressions has also been a blessing.

1) I migrated to Australia in 2000 and one of my sons received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation here and the other the sacrament of Confirmation. I was shocked to find that throughout the preparation process neither of my sons was spoken to by a priest even once. In fact, they were not even required to come to Church for preparation. The only time they were invited was to brief them on how they should line up and where they should sit!!!! Given that most of the parents who turned up for briefing were not regular attendees at Church, I believe that their interest in sitting with their kids and preparing them would be very limited. During the First Communion Masses, I was saddened to see that the priest's sermon was a normal one and not directed at the young children in their language. There was no attempt to make the kids feel

special. In fact, it felt that the kids should feel privileged to receive the sacraments. Needless to say, most of the kids do not go to Church or receive the sacraments. 2) At a Good Friday service the priest lashed out at those who were once-in-a-year Church attendees. Surely that was an opportunity to engage and be more inviting? 3) Both my sons joined the parish Youth Group building on the excitement of Sydney's World Youth Day. I made it a point to drive them to Church for their weekly meetings. When I asked them what they did at the meetings, I was disappointed to learn that it was just prayer and meditation. Young kids need to do things and contribute to God's work—I am not suggesting that prayer is not important but it cannot be a whole hour and half every week of just that 4) A great initiative was taken to have a Sports meet of various parishes in the [ - ] Diocese. I was extremely disappointed to note the almost complete absence of parish priests and diocesan representatives. This was a great opportunity for the bishop and parish priests to engage with young people but was lost. 5) The St Vincent de Paul Society was magnificent in reaching out to us when we arrived as new migrants. The love and support we received will forever remain in my heart.

Lowana is a study centre encouraging women of all ages to achieve their full potential to serve society. Lowana is a project of the Association for Educational Projects Limited (AEPL), a non-profit company focused on promoting educational activities, character development and Christian ideals. The formation of Lowana is entrusted to Opus Dei—a Personal Prelature in the Catholic Church that helps people to become saints in everyday life. The priest's willingness and availability to hear confessions and give spiritual direction in Lowana every week has taught the women who attend the centre the importance of confession and the spiritual fruits and abundance of graces that come from the sacrament. The benefits of confession has allowed women of Lowana to openly discuss confession with their friends who do not believe it is important or do not go with as much regularity. Spiritual direction from the priest and a lay mentor has helped women who attend Lowana to live their faith consistently despite the downfalls. Spiritual direction has helped them to deal with their downfalls without getting discouraged but has helped them to realise to rely more on the grace of God rather than their own strength, to grow in sanctity. They have learned they can keep going despite the inevitable struggles that come with everyday life. Lowana's community service activities and regional and international service projects has helped women to discover their vocation. Giving back to society increases the capacity to be more generous and therefore, to do the will of God.

My role as a Youth Coordinator has exposed me to how 'out of touch' my youth feel with the Church due to the limits placed upon their ability to connect with priests and youth leaders and that the greater Church and Diocese seem to think they want dance parties and social events. The youth desire leadership, faith formation and an opportunity to connect over the challenges and strengths of their Catholic Faith however, the Church as a whole in the Diocese seems to ignore this.

The local Church only had the plenary pray but did not promote how to have your say until found out through another parish. Either not well organised or wanting to control what was being said. The answer to the Plenary Council is already been revealed to us.

Story 1. I lived in St [ - ]'s parish [ - ] for 36 years between 1980 and 2016. In the early years, there was a brickworks nearby and at 12 noon each day the lunch siren for the brick workers could be

heard across the suburb. In time, the brickworks closed and in more recent years I was delighted to hear the lunch siren had been replaced by the Angelus bells ringing out through [ - ] from the school on the hill. This gave me a daily reminder firstly, to pray; secondly to think of Our Lady; and thirdly that I am proud to be a Catholic and to have the variety of people in my suburb know that we 'practice' this aspect of our Faith. It leads to conversations about the meaning of this prayer and the Gospel story it expressed. Story 2. Coming home from Sunday Mass, one day in the early 1990's when our children were aged between 3 and 15 years, my husband casually asked the kids, "what was the Gospel about today?" No one could remember. On the following few Sundays he asked the same question and eventually one of the children remembered. This developed into a weekly challenge for each of them to try to remember something about the Gospel and perhaps something the priest said about it. Over time, it became a 5-minute discussion of the Gospel when we got home, and eventually lead to our purchasing a Bible for each of the Children which they all still have. The exercise has borne various fruits such as an appreciation for the Gospel; an improved attentiveness at Mass; a familiarity with the layout of the Bible; a fond memory of the family 'tradition' of the discussion; a confidence in expressing their understanding of and questions arising from the Gospels. Some have gained more than others and for one or two the fruit hasn't fully ripened yet but I have every confidence that God has already heard my prayers on their behalf and will provide the grace for a stronger Faith in time thanks to that chance question and the simple tradition that developed. Story 3. I have had the immense gift of a Catholic education from Kindergarten to Year 12. My own parents were not always practicing their faith but I had the valuable example of good teachers and some religious in my schools. In adult life after a very destabilising few years at university, I was re-grounded in my faith by a good parish priest who delivered inspiring and informative homilies and subsequently by attending some formation activities within the parish. My husband and I participated in a Lenten group, assisted in RCIA programs and eventually ran some "education" sessions in the parish based on audio talks about the Catholic Faith. Looking for more we began to attend formation activities provided by Opus Dei and discovered a new and enriching understanding of prayer, work, family life and personal holiness, all of which has begun to have a positive impact our family and the next generation.

The benefits derived from such a move would be:- 1. The Pope is the visible single focal point and head of 1.2 billion Catholic. The bishop's conference in Australia should be the visible single unifying focal point and head of Australian Catholic. 2. Having had discussions with members of the Orthodox Church about the possibility of uniting with the Catholic Church, the common theme that comes up all the time is "which part of the Catholic Church are we going to unite ourselves to?" Another common theme is that successful unification can only be achieved through a grass roots campaign—i.e., it cannot happen from the top down. 3. Whenever I'm successful in attracting some friends back to practice their faith in the Catholic Church, they're always struck by why different parishes do things differently, and then naturally some doubt arises in their mind as to which stream of Catholicism should they follow. 4. If anyone has the opportunity to attend Mass in any Eastern Church—be it in any country in the diaspora or in their country or origin—one will always find a faithful adherence to their scripture and liturgy text (be it in their original language or translated ones)—to their rubrics, to the procedural practices in sacraments etc. And their Churches are always full. Some ideas in implementing this change. 1. There must be a

binding agreement and unity amongst all the bishop members of the Australian conference to agree on: 2. What are the basic tenets of our Catholic faith 3. One single approved English translation scripture book to be used to the letter in all parishes 4. One single approved liturgy book to be used to the letter in all parishes. 5. A standard for rubrics. One single approved set of rubrics and procedures 6. The importance of priestly and religious garb in public. 7. A standard for Church buildings. 8. A standard that places the Tabernacle as the single most important focal point of the Church. 9. Those parishes that currently do things differently should not be ostracized- but through prayer and gentle persuasion- should be brought along to recognize the importance of unity and Uniformity. 10. The seminaries must instil in the character of graduating priests that obedience to the office of the bishop is akin to obedience in the military by lower ranks to higher ranks. This should not serve as a negating factor to the character or charisma of the priest, on the contrary, priests should be encouraged to speak up their minds through the appropriate internal channels. 11. The Second Vatican Council issued a decree on ecumenism in which it declared that it realizes that the Holy Objective of reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ transcends human powers and gifts. So the driving force behind unifying the public signs of the Catholic Church should be this Holy Objective of uniting all Christians under the one and only Catholic Church of Christ.

My biggest faith experience of faith that has shaped me is my experiences with God, both in and out of the Catholic Church. Through my work both in the Catholic Church, and in other Christian Churches I have been able to get to know Jesus very well. My interactions with clergy and lay people in all of these settings have helped me get to know Jesus in a very deep way. The interactions that I have in these different settings are all unique and show me a different side of Jesus. Sometimes I wish that my Church, the Catholic Church could show me all of these sides of Jesus, and also show approval for the comfort that Jesus gives me.

Throughout the ups and downs of life I have been blessed with faith communities that have stood beside me and weathered all storms and celebrated all significant events. The Church has and continues to form me as a person, to carry myself and family in compassionate love and to share a hope and aspects of peace which is beyond words. My life is of Church, my work is of Church.

I receive weekly formation through a talk with a layperson for a group of girls as well as regular confession and formation from a priest. The impact of regular injection of spiritual nourishment is particularly helpful to live my ordinary day with the presence of Our Lord in it. That's what it means to be Catholic, to have Christ in our day every day.

I have had a very bad experience with the Church which has not only caused me trauma but has also caused relationship problems with my mother. The Church had interfered where they shouldn't and the hurt can still be felt up to today. People who have been involved in my matter have turned a blind eye towards what has been done to me. Up to today, I feel the Church has abandoned me and that no one could care less, leaving me without closure. Saying this, the Church has sowed the seed of anger inside of me which I am finding very difficult to get rid of.

When I attended World Youth Day as a young person in 2005, I was probably on the way out of the Church. I was in a relationship with a non-Catholic, I attended a parish youth group but the actions and attitudes of my peers there were not very different to others in the world around us

and I didn't really believe that faith could help me in my life, which was going pretty well without any real need for God. Something drew me to WYD because of the experiences I had seen others have there: they returned energised, inspired and full of life. It was at WYD that I encountered other young people for whom faith really made a difference. They were reverent, considered their actions in light of Church teaching and prayed to a God who was real and was their friend. I also encountered a priest who spoke of the transforming power of God in our lives and that we can only live life to the full if God is at the centre of all we do: if he is given priority above everything and everyone else. To be honest, these interactions troubled me, and in some ways angered me. I was angry at a Church that I believed was outdated and judgemental. I was annoyed at the idea that I wasn't doing the 'right' thing, or that God wanted me to change. But I also needed to acknowledge a deep dissatisfaction within me for more and a sense that there had to be more to life than what I was currently experiencing. It was during Mass one day that I felt God spoke to me really powerfully and lovingly. They played the song 'Open My Eyes' at the offertory and I realised that this was God speaking to me, asking me to open my eyes, ears and heart to his voice, his face and his heart of love. I was still a bit annoyed with God at this stage, but I could see that he really had my best interests at heart in wanting the absolute best for me, and wanting me to invite him into my life and allow him to influence it more. Through the words of this song, I allowed God into my life and to influence my life more. I allowed myself to be open to God's voice, the voice of those around me who were guiding me and the voice of the wisdom of the Church ... and I haven't really looked back. Since this experience, I've felt more free, energised and joyful than ever before. I've seen how liberating it is to place God first in one's life and to see how everything else can flow on from there. I'm authentically part of our Catholic community and I love it. I encourage others to open their heart to God's love and to place him first in their lives too. I can see that God's love is transformative in healing brokenness, soothing loneliness and giving life a purpose and a direction. To me this is the gift that the Church has to offer the world and I'm excited to be a part of a Church that is committed to sharing the love of God with every human being.

Every Church has a different feel to it. I found that the holier the priests the holier the Church people becomes. I am more inclined to participate in Mass that gives me assurance of holiness peace and heaven. I am more inspired to be holy and forget what the world has to offer. The priority of souls is always the focal point in homily delivery. Hence my mind is awakened about the possibility of being focus with the Lord even in chaos. I noticed that many fruits happened in holy Churches e.g. more priests and more religious and holiness of parishioners happened.

I have been very disappointed in a number of the overseas priests who have brought their own cultural practices and imposed them on our community. Many of these practices are very conservative and pre-Vatican II and not recognising that our Church has moved on. The other issues I have experienced is overseas priests once made parish priests or given any authority and power seem to revert to a very high level of clericalism where there is no accountability or transparency and they see themselves as a power unto themselves.

So we are here to serve and be served. To spread the word of God by living our lives and setting an example.

My story is briefly this: I became more strongly attracted to God in my late teens. I entered a diocesan seminary and stayed for about 4.5 years. I was searching for a real God, an intimate God,

not the God of my upbringing—distant, uninvolved. I was involved in Church as a musician mainly, though found that priests mostly did not understand much about music in liturgy and that generally, liturgy had to be done and over with—few asked how music could be made more life giving, nourishing. Of course, they had their way. The psalm had a special significance for me. It often expressed what God was doing in my life. I have mainly been dissatisfied with the institutional Church—priests and bishops mainly. I wonder if priests really do keep up with new developments, new ways of seeing life—like that introduced by science and the new cosmology and the spirituality associated with it. I've seen scant evidence of it. The religious orders of sister and brothers – especially the former are streets ahead due to foresight of their Orders I found my way ahead through engaging with Adult Faith Education where ever I could find it. The Aquinas Academy was most helpful over many years. This led me to retreat centres as I was desiring a deeper more intimate relationship with God. My key experience on 3 Dec 2002 of God's personal mysterious love for me was the start of a long journey which continues. Studies at the BBI in Pennant Hills were very enjoyable and nourishing during the first decade of this century. Nourishment for my journey has not come from the Eucharistic liturgy or from the local parish—there were times when I have come close to disengaging from such liturgy for this reason. Nourishment has come through joining groups which look at texts that break the traditional stale mould of who God is and who we are as human beings—much more positive and life affirming, those who are in touch with a much deeper and personal sense of God. I am currently part of two groups focused around study of a text, conversation on that text and prayer. Reflection mornings and retreats are important to my faith life/relationship with God. And I still have a lot of growing to do. Personal daily prayer is important. I am married and have now 3 children in their 30's. It is easy to see why they don't connect with Church / Mass. The knowledge I have gained and insights and yearnings from my readings have left me disillusioned with institutional Church—where all the say is in the priests and bishops who are often, apparently not very good at listening – mostly, with some notable exceptions: e.g. [ - ] and [ - ] ([ - ]). See something here – [ - ] with his deep spirituality background, [ - ] with his experience of abuse and marginalisation. I felt a strong sense, after hearing the two archbishops on the PC2020 website, that God really wanted me and the Church to listen to each other closely if God's Church was to be renewed.

I attended Sunday Mass at a Catholic Church in Coffs Harbour in December 2018. I noticed that the Church choir were composed of elderly gentlemen. While the voice and melody of the singing was heavenly to say the least, I was wondering if there were groups of choir that serve the Church on weekends. A Filipino-Australian friend of mine who lives there told me that one time they asked the parish priest (also of Filipino descent) if they could form a choir of Filipino singers living in Coffs Harbour to help during weekends. The priest's blunt response held them back. He said he might be embarrassed during Mass and to hold off forming a choir group until he can be replaced as parish priest. What would Jesus have done? Certainly not the way the parish priest did.

What has shaped me is the example of Catholic, lay, clerical and religious, who have embodied the response to the call of God to give themselves for the concrete life of the Church.

1. We see a misalignment between the conduct of some clergy who make themselves superior and instead of being true to their vocation of service, they expect to be served. This has caused some people to disrespect the clergy and others to walk away from the Church especially after the

findings from the Royal Commission. Has the Church moved off the track that Jesus set us on with his simple teachings about love, inclusion, mercy and compassion by placing too much emphasis on what the hierarchy of the Church deems to be important, and over the ages has become the culture of the Church with the traditions, rules, power, authority and patriarchy. How do we capture this (first century) Gospel simplicity in our worship and fellowship? 2. We shared a few stories. Bishop Vincent was the first bishop to visit the Women in the Australian Church group in 30 years. How a woman was furious that during a Good Friday gathering, Mary Magdalene seem to have been omitted from the readings. How a detailed report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia published in 1999 named "Woman and Man" seem to have fallen on deaf ears with no action taken. How the Cairns diocese have engaged a female chancellor due to the lack of priest. Are female deacons a possibility? 3. The Catholic Church has the numbers to put pressure on governments and other groups to speak up and put its weight behind things that matter for better social justice. We shared our stories of how the Church was able to use its numbers to stop changes to school funding. We understand that this is a political subject and can upset either party. We need to consider the needs of refugees, homeless, the poor, victims of domestic violence, unemployed, disabled, Indigenous as well as environmental issues. 4. The Church is constantly criticised on its failings. We shared stories on how the media is trying to silence those that want to defend the Church. An example was raised about a talk back radio hosted by Alan Jones that did not allow nuns to voice their opinion. The Church has been criticised for its failures so there is a need to reflect on those failures and make the changes necessary to try to ensure that they are not repeated. We need to be clearer about what the gospels means in everyday life. We need to show the people of Australia that the Church is taking action and show the changes that are happening. We believe that the online presence, such as Facebook and Twitter, is good but more is needed to reach TV audience such as segments in current affairs programs.

Having attended Youth Group throughout High school and University in Australia, there were people who were able to help me along my faith journey. Once I started work and got married there was hardly anything on offer for that age range. I think the implementation of family groups in parishes would be extremely beneficial in keeping families connected to Church. \*My children attend Diocese Catholic school and whilst I am pleased with some aspects of their Religious Education I am disappointed that they only attend parish Mass once a term. \*I love being part of parish community, that the Children feel at home at their Church and understand the importance of being involved in Church Life. I would love to see so many other families feel connected to their faith and parish.

My experience with the Church is that God is my support system. I find peace and solace when I pray. This needs to be an option to be instilled in our kids to avoid drug abuse and resort to alcohol usage.

Cradle Catholic and a witness to the dismantling of Catholic traditions and education and its consequent effect on attendance and identity. Young people no longer identify as Catholic.

World Youth Day in Sydney 2008 was a big turning point in my faith journey. Not only did I experience Our Lord through the large talks given by different international keynote speakers but

the topics they covered were equally relevant to our society and the youth of the Catholic Church. More of this is needed on a frequent basis.

Our experience as a young married couple coming into a new parish (St Michael's, Blacktown South) with a very devout, humble and engaging parish priest, who was universally loved by parishioners and children of the neighbouring school alike, gave us a role model of the priestly life. This inspired us to play an active part in parish life.

On the first issue of Refugees in Detention, I am aware of much false information in the media creating scaremonger amongst some Christians, that make them reluctant to accept more refugees (especially those arriving illegally by boat) into Australia. The Church should play a part in dispelling misinformation, and should guide its members to act as Jesus would. With regard to the Celebration of Easter it does not show consistency and unity to potential new Christians that the many branches celebrate Easter on different days. It would be good for our faith to all celebrate at the same time just as we celebrate Christ's birth on the one date.

Not at this stage but I emphasise my love of the Catholic Church for its role, along with my parents, in fostering my relationship with God. This is the most important thing in my life. I grieve deeply for the Church that I love because I'm far from convinced that, as an institution, it is open to the Holy Spirit in its journey towards authentically representing the Gospel to the modern world. There is gross abuse of power on the part of many of our leaders who proclaim absolutes and certainties on issues that need to be prayerfully explored. There is gross neglect of issues that need to be acknowledged and addressed. At the same time, there are so many bishops, religious and laity who are living their faith in exemplary manner. These are the hope for the future. Bishops at the Plenary Council, please acknowledge them, listen to them, especially when they say things you would prefer not to hear and thank God for them because they are the future and we cannot afford to lose them.

Many positive experiences as a young man [good school, good parish, C.Y.O]. Long-term parish Council member—some good outcomes but sometimes there where 'questions a Council should not ask'. In more recent times, there has been a lack of faith in priests, who have conveyed their own lack of faith to others—including schoolchildren through Religious Co-ordinators. Some religious teachers felt liberated by the idea that communion hosts, after Consecration, are just bread serving as symbols. My main concern is that most young Catholic give up the Faith before leaving school. Their belief is in the God Science. Belief is often absolute, although they have a very hazy idea about what 'Science' is and is not. 'What everybody knows' in not something Catholic have contested in school and in society. When a Catholic has sought compassion from his bishop over child sexual abuse by a priest, he has sometimes come up against the visage of an insurance company rep. When I mentioned one such case to a friend, he replied that he had been a lay missionary for 40 years and had not met many bishops who he thought of as decent human beings. Bishop is a difficult and demanding role. The people of Milan knew that when they insisted Ambrose come out of the brothel. Where should we get our bishops from?

Just when is this abuse by priests going to end. So demoralising to the Faithful. It is never far from my mind that we are being led by questionables. And even in the latest media, the African and Asian bishops are seen to be dismissive of the problem. "Not how to win friends and influence

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| <p>people". But for the ordinary punter, he does not know where the truth lays and whether the priests and bishops only paying lip service to the problem.</p>   |
| <p>Note 18-year-old not interested in participating he does not want to be a part of this survey and was asked to participate as part of the family but has not responded. 82 female 81 male and 62 male were "shaped" in Britain. When they came to Australia in 1969, the priest had his corgi dog on the altar and nothing seemed as reverent as it did in the UK. Does not like calling priests by first names and not wearing habits. 55-year-old faith is shaped through her Augustinian parish, which is multicultural and welcoming and offers many opportunities for spiritual development. 21-year-old female enjoys the Catholic Youth Festivals and credits those for developing her faith as well as parish youth group BASIC GIFT.</p>   |
| <p>Father [ - ] in [ - ] Croatian Church really brought the ten commandments into everyday life. Encouraging men to love and respect their wives, partners and women to do the same. Also principal [ - ] ... his music at [ - ] Church really ROCKS the Church and a person really wants to come to Church as one feels uplifted when they leave, feels like they have sung their praises to the Lord.</p>  |
| <p>I am involved in our parish as follows:—parish Management Council, Commentator, Collector and operating the projector. I also get to help with B-B-Q's etc.</p>   |
| <p>My parents were converts. They sent me to a school formed by members and families of Opus Dei. My faith has been greatly shaped by my experience there. The school provided daily Mass given by an Opus Dei priest, which was a great privilege. The religion classes were so relevant to our times, and facilitated a thorough knowledge and understanding of why we believe what we believe as Catholic. I left school with a great desire to love and serve God as best I could and to share my faith with conviction, passion and charity. I have recently discovered the traditional Latin Mass and I find it a very powerful means of worship, although I still attend Novus Ordo Masses too. I'm married with 2 kids and will be sending them to an Opus Dei school like mine in the hopes they will receive the same beautiful and inspiring instruction in the faith that I did.</p> |
| <p>My parish is an open community where many people help run and develop what we offer. The priest has a small part to play in this but allows individuals to shine. However, the concern is that our PP still needs to be at management meetings, finance meetings etc. He can only do so much, but he is required to be an active committee member. We are lucky in our parish with the PP we have. But that was a roll of the dice. Maybe in the future, we won't be lucky and things will go back to the old ways. This should not be allowed to occur.</p>  |
| <p>When I came to Australia I was 21 and I believe I had a strong Faith, I grew up in a Catholic country. The kindness of other people in the Church living with Faith has strengthened my faith beyond what I experienced in my home country. So the experience of living among people who live their Faith has made it real. I'm a cradle Catholic but as a teenager I really chose it for myself with the encouragement of Opus Dei formation.</p>  |
| <p>I met Opus Dei in Australia and it made me grow in my faith, realising my defects and my capacity to accept God's help to grow in my faith</p>  |

I thank the Church for the foundation of my faith. The Church has deceived me by stopping me from fully meeting and knowing my Lord Jesus through its doctrine, your not teaching and showing us how to take our faith to a higher level, being in a personal relationship not a belief but knowing the real JESUS. I stepped out and cried out to God to reveal Himself. He did in that moment God flooded me with His love his electrifying energy His supernatural touch of power. I surrendered. God is real and Jesus spoke to me, I heard his voice for the first time. I was born again (John 3:3). You hid this truth from me and still do today. My prayer to the Church is that you also come to this truth in living JESUS.

General feeling was that when the Nun's (Sisters) taught at the schools, the education with respect of the religious aspects was much stronger than it is today.

I am what is sometimes referred to as a revert. I gained help at a critical time from Protestants. I attended a Protestant women's group and Bible studies and I listened to an evangelical Bible study on line. The beauty of God's love was re awakened in me. Why didn't I find this in my Catholic Church? Is it that you can attend Mass and leave and no one will speak to you? There is little excitement about the Gospel message and no avenue that is readily accessible and attractive enough to entice you. After my re conversion I started to attend Mass and have found much joy and comfort in my re-connection with the Catholic Church. But the path was through Protestantism. What are we missing?

I've had the privilege of being in a few gatherings where speakers like Sam Clear and Fr. Rob Galea have made presentations and I can see how they are able to resonate with the younger audience. Our young people need to hear these messages more. This is where they learn that faith is lived day to day and not just on Sundays.

I am saddened to watch many Catholics (family and friends) who no longer practice the faith or have left the Church. Without traditions of the Church, there isn't anything to pass onto the future generations!

I have grown up with many friends and family members who have stopped practising the faith due to them not learning or being shown to know, love and serve God from a young age. I believe if people were taught and shown to really to know, love and serve God that they would either never move away from the faith/stop practising the faith, or if they did stop practising that they would come back to the faith as they would realise that they are not truly happy without God in their lives.

I went to a youth group once and had lots of fun in the activity and then after we had a meaningful discussion about our faith.

As a Maronite Catholic, I grew up in Lebanon with our God and our faith the centre of everything we do. As a teenager in Australia and about to finish school I yearned for a sense of belonging, a sense of feeling I'm home again! I Thank God that I was able to fulfil that feeling in my Catholic Church youth group. We came together to pray, go on retreats, Bible study, Choir and also laugh and have a good time under God's Shelter! Thank God for the priests that we had to have organised such committees in our parish. This was one of the biggest blessings in my life as it shaped me to be who I am today. And kept me safe! In my twenties also attended talks through

the parish given by priests and faith educated members of the community, which kept me well-nourished. Now my Children are in an independent Catholic school, a school that once again I feel I have found home again and a sense of belonging! An amazing community that comes together in prayer and give a helping hand when needed. There are talks for the mothers about our faith and guidance on how to fulfil our vocation as mothers. Our school reinforces what we teach our children at home and to live a life full of faith and virtues.

For me the experience of acceptance and friendship have been pivotal in my continued involvement in the Church.

Reflecting on Elijah: It is not the great revelations that matter but the still, small voice. There is patience needed while waiting for God. I accept whatever comes because I am consecrated to God and Our Lady of Schoenstatt. Now a new life-changing diagnosis brings uncertainty and a sense of not being in control. I am reminded now of a poster I saw a long time ago which said, "Let go and Let God". Though we like to be in control, we need to remember that we are the instruments, not the controller. Schoenstatt teaches Prudence—know when to bite your tongue and pray the person will make a good decision.

I worship with a community that is small, committed and open. Many are thirsting for richer ways to be a community truly reflecting the values of the realm of God. It's nice to be here.

I have been a member of the Church since my baptism at the age of 6 weeks old. I have never left the Church, but the Church has left me. I do not understand the cruelty of this stance in the light of the Churches propensity for covering up the crimes of religious over decades. I do not see how the Church can judge divorced people as being worse than those people. It breaks my heart that the Church is comfortable in driving people away from the faith while supporting those who have abused others. The Church needs to change.

I'm a born Catholic, raised Catholic, practicing Catholic and will die a Catholic. However, I feel that at this point the Church is under attack with hidden agendas.

This is a story about how I lost my faith in the Church. We received an urgent call. My brother -in-law was dying and my wife sent me to [ - ] (where our children attended school) to get a scapula blessed. The priest was disinterested and took 45 precious minutes to come out for a 30 second blessing. My wife called me in panic and told me that I was to stay at the Church for her to pick me up as we were out of time (so I couldn't drive home). While I was waiting, a parishioner drove up and the priest had a good look over his car before spending more time blessing it than he did with the scapula for my brother in law. Then he got in the car and drove away. By the time my wife picked me up, I was openly weeping at the injustice of it all. We've barely attended Mass since he died.

Candidates for the priesthood and religious be made aware of social justice issues and be encouraged to speak out and take action at a local level where possible to eliminate poverty, homelessness and abuse of the most vulnerable in the community especially children and the elderly. Bishops follow the example of Pope Francis and live in modest accommodation and use less expensive motor vehicles, people expect them to be men of God, to live simply. Discourage the use of honorary titles such as My Lord, Your Grace, Your Eminence, and Holy Father. Sell or

lease current (mansions) property and use the proceeds for helping people who are disadvantaged and speak out against conditions that that keep people disadvantaged in this country. Make rich parishes aware of the poor parishes and their needs especially in remote, regional and outer suburbs. They can sponsor / twin with these parishes by taking up an annual collection. (When we lived in [ - ] in the early 1980's, [ - ] parish used to have an annual collection for the new parish at [ - ]). Social justice must be built on interpersonal justice and extend to environmental justice, important to speak out and take action against environmental pollution and climate change, as it is always the poor who suffer first from toxic air and water, from storms and lack of food. Apart from government, the Catholic Church is the largest provider of quality education, health and social services. Bishops must work for real change and a better future for Indigenous peoples.

#living the dream #for everything that has come. THANK YOU for everything yet to come, YES.  
#picking up my cross #don't want to walk alone, can't do it without companions on the journey.  
#JOIN ME? #Walk much?

The Catholic Church in Australia is all but in ruins. Perhaps I come across as overly pessimistic but I say all this with great hope that God will bring forth great fruit from this Council. I am 30 years old and I am a celibate man with attraction to the same sex (gay if you will). When I was 17, the Lord allowed me to be free from all sexual sin (acting out, masturbation) and I have been free since. As a man who has SSA, I find it very sad when priests and lay faithful seem to suggest that there could be a possibility the Church could change its position on homosexuality. I find this unacceptable and shudder at the thought of how many young Catholics who were just like myself and never received the grace I did, have accepted the gay life style because of peoples misplaced desire 'not to offend' or some false compassion'. I'm persuaded to think that if we had more people like myself actually sharing their struggles publicly in the Church, more young men and women would be less bound by the secrecy and shame these desires come with and they could seek help or at least see someone of whom they can say "Yes, someone who knows what I'm going through. I'm not alone." Courage is a good organisation but it needs more engagement in ALL parishes and we need to hear the testimonies of those who have walked down that road but have received the grace to be free from its enslavement. As the scripture says "They conquered him (the devil) by the blood of the lamb and the word of their TESTIMONY." SSA in Christian circles is taboo. This is also unacceptable. I couldn't even mention it in confession when I was young because there was no avenue I could pursue to where it was safe to open up about it. Whilst I acknowledge with great thankfulness that I received nothing but mercy when I was finally able to confess (and truly, I have received great pastoral help and understanding in every confession where I've confessed such things) I dare say that MOST Catholics who struggle with SSA don't get to that point because it is all in the dark, even from the pulpit. Alcoholics have freedom to be open about these things and thus seek healing and are generally safe in most circles to open up. This just does not exist for Catholic with SSA. I also mention here the poor state of Catholic education at the moment, in schools and seminaries. My Grandmother was [ - ] who did a lot to help Catholic schools in Australia, but I fear the help we've received has become our undoing. One of my science teachers in year 9 openly declared if the child in her womb was defective, she would get an abortion. Another teacher happily and ambiguously defended

homosexuality (I say ambiguously because perhaps he was rightly defending them against unjust discrimination. The issue is, it was not CLEAR to young impressionable Catholics like myself if it was that or the gay life style). This section will be continued in an additional document...

I want to talk about my experience of different faith in my family and I would like it to be included in the Plenary. Different faiths in families are more common now in multicultural Australia. Young people falling in love don't think of the consequences of the inherent struggle especially the effect on the children. The Church needs to think about education and formation for young people on this topic. The rule of bringing children up Catholic is merely a token if there is no support for these families as they grow and encounter problems. There needs to be continuity: • Marriage preparation • Commitment to raise child as Catholic at point of marriage • Carrying out what is needed to raise the child Catholic • The child growing up and into adulthood as a faith-filled Catholic. The Practise of faith is so important! Children need to be in Church to settle into the faith.

I received my education through the Catholic systemic school system, where I feel I gained little understanding about the truths of the faith. I went on to become a teacher, and was horrified at some of the things teachers were teaching in religion classes. I now have four children of my own, not in the Catholic systemic schools, and have seen how they embrace the truth when it is not watered down. My 16-year-old daughter recently attended a 10-day retreat (IMS). She returned full of fervour and asked to attend adoration more regularly. We found it difficult to find exposition times in parishes around us that matched her availability (she is still in school).

After the news of 26/2/19, I felt the need to include this response. I feel that the Australian Catholic Church keeps using band aids to solve the current problems within the Australian Catholic Church and within ministries within the Australian Catholic Church, particularly the servant role of the priesthood. Whilst I so appreciate priests from India, Africa and other countries and cultures, answering the requests to come to Australia, what I often hear from them is that they miss their own countries and want to go home—or I hear parishioners says that their priests don't understand where they are coming from, literally and figuratively. I once had a parish priest verbally abuse me because I did not tell him that a Bishop was coming to the parish for an event that I and the group I was involved in organised. The fact that the 'assistant priest' was the one who booked the Church and spoke to the PP about the event was not relevant to the PP in speaking to me, even though I tried to explain that. I really believe that the real issue within the Church is that the male only priesthood leads to abuses within parishes—to hear a priest say: 'In my Church'—is very disheartening and whilst I think I understand what he means, it does not respond to the Gospel way of Leadership within the Church. We can no longer be an exclusive Church, particularly in the role of Ministers. We have good Catholic women, who feel frustrated by the lack of dialogue regarding women ministers, that they go elsewhere. Becoming Celebrants, etc., even though they still have a great love for the Australian Catholic Church. Why can't we be a Church open to allowing women to become more involved in the ministries of the Church, as Acolytes, as Deacons, as priests and even as Bishops. What is the Australian Catholic Church so afraid of, why can't we be leaders in the Catholic Church and say, we need to have a more balanced Church—in terms of gender? If we want to grow as a Church and as a People, we need to address the lack of inclusiveness in the Church seriously.

I've seen in a parish recently the inclusion of air conditioning to make it more comfortable for parishioners- and I have no problem with that—but how can we show that whilst we want people to be comfortable—we are not draining valuable environmental resources.

My parents took me to Mass weekly and encouraged me to value my faith. They did so in the 1960's and 1970's when to question was to sin. This has led to me being grateful that they gave me the gift of faith, but sad that this lack of questioning by so many lay people has resulted in the mess the Church is in at present. My parish has been a safe and good place, but it is spending \$6million on a new Church. This is painful to watch when I read that the compensation cap set by The Melbourne Response was \$50,000 and that confidentiality agreements were enforced.

Through Catholic answer radio from USA some of us become very Catholic because they answer our questions about Catholic biblical arguments on faith and morals. And because of Eucharistic adoration some of us was deeply touch by the real presence.

I am a cradle Catholic, always attended Mass and received the sacraments. Thought that I was a good Catholic. I am married, a mother of two children. I lost my job a few years ago, and almost went into depression. I did not want to leave the house, I had to sit in front of the computer to look for a job. A friend invited me to accompany her to a weekday Mass. It was the turning point in my life. I saw a mother of 8, children at Mass that day. She was dying due to breast cancer, but had handed all her worries to our Lord, she was so serene. Another lady was nursing a very sick husband, but made time to attend Mass. I learnt so much that one day. All I had to do was completely Trust in our Lord, make time for Him in my life, and hand all my worries and concerns with Trust to Him. One week day while I was at Mass, I received 2 calls with Job offers. I feel that losing my job was probably in God's plan to bring me closer to Him. Before losing my job, I felt that all I had achieved in the workplace, was all my own doing. I don't think that I ever considered the gifts and talents which Jesus had given to me. I am forever grateful for that experience. Especially for the ladies who showed me how to truly Trust and love our Lord despite any difficulties that we may be experiencing.

We are burdened by the atrocious behaviour of some Catholic priests, brothers, nuns and lay people and while I am horrified by the defilement of the young and vulnerable and the betrayal of trust by the perpetrators I cannot help but remember all those who have been faithful to their vows and have lived, and are living lives of integrity. My life has been enriched by the nuns and priests who have been part of it. The nuns whose example, gentleness, interest, humour and sternness shaped my life. My mother whose love for the nuns who ran the orphanage overseas where she was raised never faltered and whose endeavours she supported financially to her end. These were women whose practical and loving faith will never be written in history books but I am forever grateful for their lives.

I volunteer as a catechist, in the local primary public schools. Seeing our students develop an awareness and appreciation of our faith is miracle enough, especially given how the demographics of my local state schools have become increasingly Muslim and non-religiously affiliated. Also, seeing how positively our supervising teachers react to our scripture class lessons is another reassuring reminder of just how important and valid our faith is.

I was born in Australia but grew up in another country till I came back when I was 20. Despite coming from a very predominantly Catholic country, it was here in Australia that I came to take my faith more seriously and has started to mature rapidly. I discovered my divine vocation here and also met my wife here in Australia. The Holy Spirit always works in mysterious ways. I discovered that it was through a deep prayer life and following a certain plan of life of prayer throughout my normal ordinary day and fulfilment of duties that has led me to know and love Jesus more.

I have great morals but I'm also to trusting and forgiving. I married a Catholic and his parents were very big in the St Vincent De Paul in our local area. Unfortunately, he falls very short of being a good role model for our 2x boys. It has included: Gambling, Alcohol, smoking, disrespect for me as a woman and a mother and not taking responsibly for his actions. I'm a nice, forgiving person, happy and I left work to raise our 2 boys while he continued to climb the corporate ladder. We have major debt because of him and he continues to blame me for his issues. I know I'm good, responsible, respectful of other, help and also don't know how to say 'No'. I get taken advantage of and I just wish the Church could include something about women taking control of their own life and not putting up with men who fall short of being a Gentleman. I've given him so many chances but I still don't leave because I believe in only 1 marriage and keeping a family together and protecting my family at any cost. I wish I could leave but where do I go?

When I was at school, Primary school at [ - ], the whole school went to confession once a month, and spent time praying in the Church as we waited our turn. It was a wonderful, practical teaching. I have made a retreat each year and frequently attend classes of Formation in the faith at [ - ] school, which my children attended. This has helped to keep my faith alive.

I have loved being a part of the Catholic Church but struggle to justify and explain the way it is portrayed to non-believers.

[ - ] (Sydney) used to have talks by "Leumen Verum" about the Catholic faith that strengthened my faith and allowed me to better defend my faith. I met Cardinal George Pell and his humility and courage left me with a lasting impression and inspiration, even 20 years after I met him. "Parousia Media" has also changed my life. I have learnt about the crusades and the Spanish Inquisition and the lives of some of the saints and some conversion stories.

From a very young age I felt God's call. Mine was to marriage and children but I have pursued other things as well, such as being a Catechist when my health allowed me to do so. I have tried to gently encourage my family and others to follow God as well, unfortunately not very successfully, but I tried. I am an avid follower of the apparitions at Medjugorje and feel that very soon God will show his hand and change the world for the better. We must remain strong and faithful and Jesus and Mary will fix everything in time. I was raised as a Catholic but am the only one of my family except for my parents that has kept the faith so I pray for their conversion every day. I am also a devotee of the Divine Mercy and say both the rosary and chaplet every day. I have great faith in these prayers.

I feel as though as I have grown older I have grown apart from the Church as the homilies and Church activities are not relevant to my age group. There are no social activities for my age group. I have reached out to the [ - ] diocese to see if they could run a calendar across parishes to know

when they have youth groups and other activities but they have refused as they will only advertise [ - ] cathedral events. Even these events are bit always advertised on social media or their website, I have also attended plenary meetings—but do not feel my voice is heard there.

I have been shaped through the beliefs in Catholicism. This has enabled me to become a better man and live by the pillars of faith, hope and love.

I was part of a youth group that was run out of my parish for ten years. In those ten years, I truly feel I became a better person because of it. I became much more active in the Church through this youth group than I ever was. I got to share my own personal thoughts and ideas about my faith and about Church, and was able to form lifelong friends. I even met my husband through this youth group. Because of our love for each other, that was able to be shared with the rest of my parish, as we would help the parish during major liturgies, feast days, hospitality and music ministry.

Growing up in the Catholic Church you would think I would be more engaged. Me and my family (7 children) have always attended the same Church and my parents was in the choir, with my dad being the conductor and me and one of my sister later joining in. Whilst I was there physically, my mind would be somewhere else, so whilst the Mass is happening I would be thinking of past events or things not relating to the Church and I would think "Ok, I went to Church on Sunday so that's enough for me" My two older sisters ended up leaving the Church (aged 27 and 28) and joined a ministry, my older brother and other older sister (aged 23 and 24) slowly stopped coming to Mass and only attend so they don't get in trouble from my parents and now it is only one of my older sisters (aged 19), me (aged 17) and my younger brother (aged 12) and nephew (aged 6) who attend Mass with my parents. We just recently moved to another parish where I and my sister and my mother joined the choir that my dad conducts. But recently, maybe for a year now, I've been wanting to change for the better, not because of what the priest said but rather because of the depression and having suicidal thoughts, when I turned to the Lord and rush of happiness went through me, if only I could explain how good it is to have the Lord with me! I feel as though if the Church reached out more to my siblings than they wouldn't have left the Church. I am 100% with my beliefs with Christ, it's just my religion that I question, and I don't know who to ask because there will be a lot of biased answers. So right now I am just praying that the Lord shows me whether I should stay in the Catholic Church or not. So right now, I believe in Jesus the son of God, but it's really the Catholic Church that I am having doubts about. Though I pray the Lord gives me the answers I seek.

I came to the Catholic faith in my mid-20s as a young female who was living in sin with no knowledge of God. There were 3 fundamental keys that played an important role in my conversion. The first was a friend sharing with me St John Paul II's teaching on 'Theology of the Body'. This quite literally changed my life. I had never heard anything so beautiful in my life. I was in shock that I had spent my entire life in Catholic schools and never ONCE was taught the truth about sexuality and marriage. I can't stress how important I think it is that we make this mandatory teaching in our Catholic schools. If I had heard this message as a young teenager on the brink of making big life decisions about sex and relationships, it could have changed my life. The second was finding a traditional, conservative priest who taught the faith with no apologies. He was firm but kind, and his orthodoxy was his most attractive quality. There is a misconception

amongst some Catholic that to bring the young people back to Church we need to become more 'modern'. Like the Protestants and the Evangelicals and the Hillsong Church. I'm here to tell you that's not true. This priest's Church was completely full every single Sunday and an overwhelming number of his parishioners were very young. Young people are thirsty for the truth! And no amount of worship music or relaxation of rules can make up for that. The third and final key to my conversion was the Eucharist. I always thought that Catholic got together at Church on a Sunday to re-enact the Last Supper. Once I was taught the true meaning of the Eucharist, that it truly is our Lord's body, blood, soul and divinity, there was no going back for me. I have a true love for the Eucharist now and it has changed my life. A lot of this originated from my priest who showed a true reverence and respect for the Eucharist every single day of his life. I consider it a true blessing to have been guided by him in my love for the Eucharist.

We are a group of young adults (age ranged 20-40 yrs) who gather together weekly to grow in our faith. We all have busy schedules and are at different stages in our lives. Some married, single, parents, working full-time, homemakers, or students. Once a week we come together at someone's house in the evening to learn. We have participated in things such as Lenten prayer groups, reading spiritual books together such as C.S. Lewis 'Mere Christianity' and, watching video Bible study programs. We like to try different types of study and on different topics of interest related to the faith. Through this weekly get-together we have learned the importance of surrounding oneself with faithful friends who support and encourage one's faith. Regardless of what is happening in our lives we make it a priority to meet every week and this has had a profound impact on our faith. Having a safe and comfortable environment to meet, where we can ask questions and gain answers from well-formed Catholic, has helped us to grow in our love and service of God. We strongly believe this kind of opportunity is important for all Catholic, no matter their age or which stage of their faith they are in. We are also grateful for the many resources we have access to through places such as Parousia Media and good Catholic bookstores. What we have learned is that it is sometimes hard to make time for God in our busy lives. But getting into a good habit of prioritising God in a small way such as a weekly get-together can help us to form better habits of prioritising God in bigger ways in our daily lives.

I would like to have our Mass said the same in each of our Churches. 1. In one Church, we are told that the Hail Holy Queen cannot be said after Mass, then go to another Church in the same area and this is done? 2. Priest saying Mass never tells you which prayers they will be using, e.g. which preface is going to be said and which Eucharistic prayer will be used; also some priest divert to any prayers not the prayers for the particular Mass of the day. This is difficult when priests are hard to understand with their various accents. 3. Also, some priest(s) sing parts of the Mass and it's hard to understand why it's different depending on which priest is saying the Mass.

It is very difficult to encourage grandchildren to be involved when "foreign priests" who are probably doing their best, turn them off. My grandson (baptised at 8, and considering being educated for First Communion) was with me and my wife, attending Mass in a nearby parish, the priest totally lost him when he harped on that any families who have only one parent were not a "proper" family, according to Jesus. He waffled on this line for over 30 minutes, this was several years ago, and we have had no joy in "Church" again.

I attended a Catholic school and Mass every Sunday and was always strong in my values. I respected my Faith as I had seen it as non-judgemental, accepting of ALL and not forceful (i.e. accepting that others may have different faiths etc.) I have always believed in God and I work as a Social Worker with the most vulnerable in the community. It is the first time in my life that I no longer attend Mass as having worked for many years with sexually abused victims, I have found the Church's behaviour and response unforgiving and so so damaging for the Victims (mostly because it is a Male run organisation which has taken so long to see or recognise the Abuse of Power within the organisation and its used gender based/orientated ways of dealing with issues). The patriarchal system and all its many flaws have been highlighted by this whole ordeal. To the point of wasting money on court and then Appeals! (and then getting off on technicalities which makes the whole system look like a complete farce) rather than accepting guilt and penance (what a joke on the whole meaning of Confession when our very High Church Leaders are so incapable of it!!!). I would have liked just one priest to say "I'm sorry for what I did, for all those I harmed and I accept my Penance in jail. I will not waste any money on legal representatives because I know I am guilty and I have done wrong ... Just one Cardinal or priest would have been good. The Catholic Church and System not only in the past but also in the present has continued to behave badly and to protect these Church leaders (as we are only looking at historical child sexual abuse we can know and assume that there is even more abuse occurring even now because that's what hierarchical systems do they protect people who behave badly, harmfully and illegally). I have lost Faith in my Catholic Churches and Leaders (only able to attend one particular priest's sermons when I do but even he has appeared naive in his understandings of the damage the Church Leaders have done in their behaviour). I have struggled to pass on my Faith to my children who have lived and breathed the hypocrisy of the Church's leaders and teachings and have struggled to fight for Catholicism when our Leaders have behaved so badly (and continue to do so by when being found guilty appealing on the money of the practitioners!) I only give money directly to charities now as I find it outrageous that my money has gone to protect paedophiles against victims of abuse (the Church should sell some of their many belongings instead as mentioned before for this), that they get expensive lawyers to represent them makes me nauseous and so very angry, I am barely hanging on to my Catholic Faith, although I have Faith still and I was considered the strongest and most faithful of my siblings (there were 3 of us). The Catholic Church has a lot to do to bring back those who are educated and open to questioning things. It needs to be more flexible and accepting of women also ...

When I was a child I was brought up in a Church that protected me in a spiritual and moral box. So long I stayed in the box I was safe. Only venial sins were allowed because they would not damn me to hell. God loved me provided I was good enough. Fear played a large part in my spirituality. Reciting prayers rather than talking to a loving God. Hearing lots of "try harder" sermons. Being frightened out of my wits during parish missions. Wondering how many thousands of years I would be burning up in purgatory. Even making a good confession was a burden to me. In my early teenage years, I suffered from scruples. On top of everything, I saw the institution of the Church as infallible and totally the voice of God. It all improved during my high school years when Vat II was in full swing. The Sisters of Mercy did a good job of explaining the changes in the Mass and the importance of the laity (not just the priests) sharing in the mission of Jesus. By encouraging us (after school) to visit the elderly in the local nursing homes they not only told us

how we could live out the mission but gave us the chance to have the experience which was very rewarding. Another faith growth happened for me when I was a young mother and I had a Spiritual moment when I realised that it was a relationship with Jesus that was the prime force in my faith not my knowledge, my loyal Catholicism, my understanding, my attendance at Mass, or my values. This turned everything on its head for me. I read the Gospels and discovered a lot of love, forgiveness and healing rather than I Must do ... , I should live ... I had better not sin ... and I should practice my Catholic duties ... This new revelation switched my understanding of a God that must be feared and loved to a God who loved me unconditionally. I now loved to pray read the scriptures and my mission in the Church (involvement in the sacramental program was enriched by this new awareness). The biggest thing though was that my faith and trust is in Jesus not in the Church. Of course, though the teachings and traditions in the Church were now in second place. However, my connection and love of the Church actually grew! In this new understanding of the Church I sometimes was reinforced in my spirituality by the witness of others both lay and religious. I found many people and Catholic organisations that shared a relationship view of Christianity. As years wore on, I noticed with sadness that not all had such a free spirituality many still operated out of an old fearful and rules-based model. Some members of the Church were clergy who still had this old negative view and I can see that this has had a stultifying effect on the Church in this modern world. So it is my hope that some real change can come from the Plenary Council.

I am enlightened by young persons whom I have helped to join the Catholic Church though my teachings in Children's Church. I am pleased when I listen to priests whom teach the word of God in their sermons in an inclusive manner and tone. I am greatly angered when I hear sermons from priests who strike fear in their sermons and scare people about the Devil punishing them if they are of a different sexuality or have not recently attended Confession.

I was a religious brother and now am married with one adult child. I am retired after working in education in both Catholic school system and the Government school system. I have been a member of the Parish Pastoral Council and am now the parish rep on the [ - ] Deanery Pastoral Council in [ - ] Diocese [ - ].

When I was 7 years old our mother had to stay in hospital for a couple of months and my sister and I had to go to [ - ] Orphanage in [ - ] NSW. There it was extremely cold and we developed chilblains which became infected sores. They covered our hands and were exceedingly painful and smelled. My elder sister asked the nun in charge of the infirmary to attend to our sores but she just scolded my sister and dismissed her. One day we were praying the Rosary with that sister in our classroom and I took my beads and sat right in front of the sister fingering the beads as I prayed. My hope was that her heart would be softened by the prayer and she would do something. Immediately when the Rosary was finished, Sister gently told me to come to the infirmary. Summoning all my courage I asked could my sister come too as she also had bad chilblains. And so she dressed our sores. For me this incident in my life is a template for the spiritual life: only by staying near to Jesus is there health for the soul. Years later, my mother subscribed me to Madonna magazine, a Jesuit publication and so I went on an Ignatian retreat and discovered how to pray with the scriptures. Then I joined Christian Life Communities, prayer groups based on Ignatian spirituality. At this time I was working and raising a young family and

battling with migraines twice a month. As the children reached young adulthood and were on the threshold of leaving home I sensed the Lord inviting me to pray with Him near the Tabernacle so I started to sometimes stay after Mass. Then in 2001, I began to enter the menopause. Suddenly the migraines became really frequent and totally unpredictable. I could no longer work or do anything that required a regular commitment. I decided the one thing I could do was pray after Mass and so every day when I was well I went to Mass and prayed afterwards. In 2003, I read "Treasure in Clay" by Bishop Fulton Sheen and how he decided to pray every day of his priesthood one hour before the tabernacle. Also I read "Ecclesia Eucharistia" by Saint John Paul II. I decided that is what I would also do from then on. I couldn't do anything active so I would do the work of prayer in the "engine room", the heart of the Church, before Jesus in the tabernacle. Also, I read Rosarium Virginis Mariae by Pope John Paul II and after seeing a beautiful ad for it on EWTN my husband and I began to pray the Rosary every day. Now I had been part of NSW Right to Life since the early 70's and used to write letters to politicians. But in 2007 I got Eternal Word Television and I was watching a prolife programme in which I learned of the enormous extent of abortion worldwide and also of the Helpers of God's Precious Infants who prayed outside abortion facilities. So I sent an email to priests for Life in America and received a reply giving me contact details for Sydney and so I joined the Helpers in [ - ] and [ - ] praying Rosaries outside the abortion facilities.

It is important for people to have an identity which can be expressed and known. Psychologically and socially, when Catholic abstained from meat on Fridays was not just for religious reasons or benefits. I think the UK Bishops have re-introduced a similar practice of abstinence. Abstinence is a common practice for most faith traditions.

At the time of writing his response to questions from the Church for the Plenary Council 2020, this young man was 27yrs of age and on the cusp of becoming a primary school teacher. In 2018, he completed his Bachelor of Education. As part of this degree, students study child psychology and learn about protective behaviours for children. He is an intelligent young man, a critical thinker, and articulate speaker. As a future educator, he has the best interests of children running through the core of his being and he is appalled by the child sex abuse scandal and its cover up by the Catholic Church, as are many, many people. Some background on Faith development: This young man is from a large extended family—mostly Catholic. His father is a primary school teacher and some of his aunts and uncles are teachers in Catholic schools. He attended a Catholic High school, [ - ] College, [ - ], with most of his primary school years spent at a local state school, (being out of zone of a Catholic school with another having an unsafe playground). He attended Mass with his family on Sundays, EVERY week, since he was a young child, up until his last year of high school at age 18yrs. During his upper primary school and early high school years he was involved helping at the Children's Liturgy classes held during Sunday Masses at [ - ] Catholic Church, [ - ], assisting his mother when it was her turn on the roster to take these classes, about once every six weeks. At his primary school, he attended weekly Catholic Scripture classes in all the years there. He made all his sacraments at [ - ] Catholic Church, [ - ], and together with a parent, he attended all the preparatory classes for Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation on Sundays after Mass, along with the other Catholic children and parents. This is a great scheme, especially for those children attending state schools, as it integrates them more seamlessly in their Faith formation

with the children from Catholic schools. He was baptised by Fr [ - ], the head of the Passionist Order of priests, at the Catholic Chapel at the Monastery of the Passionist priests at [ - ], NSW. This young man has been immersed in Catholic culture and teaching at school, at Church, in his family and extended family, but like so many young people he has walked away completely DISILLUSIONED with the Catholic Church.

For too long we have lost our way as followers of Jesus Christ. For too long individuals in the Church have excluded people, abused people (including sexual abuse) and lorded it over people as has been uncovered in the world media over recent years. It is time for the Church to get back to the message of Jesus. A member of my family is separated from her husband and has been so for many years. She will not divorce him because she thinks that she will be in the wrong and excluded from the Church and the sacraments. What is wrong here is the misconception the Church has left her with. That she should suffer the consequences of a broken marriage which wasn't her fault and continue to be punished by Church structures of exclusion that claim to profess love of all. Isn't this hypocritical of the Church? If the Church accepted divorce as an option to ending a failed marriage then people might not turn their backs on the Church today.

Our group agreed that the influence of their traditional families played a great part in their faith journeys even though no family was perfect! Also, the cohesiveness and enthusiasm within their parish communities (or the lack of it) has been a big influence in their lives.

We have lived in the same parish community for over 28 years. Over this time, attendance at our parish 9.30am Sunday Mass has notably dwindled, as evidenced by now near-empty front pews and a generally loosely packed Church. The picture becomes more concerning if we consider the decrease of weekend Masses from 4 (in 1991) to current 2. Of those present, there is a clear divide in age: most attendees are adults 35-ish and over; and about 20 (or maybe 30 if the Mass is prepared for a primary class of the CEO school) young children between ages 0 and 12 and their parents. Sadly, one can count the number of teenagers and young single adults on one hand. It is also heartbreaking for some of us facilitators of parish sacramental programs (Reconciliation and Eucharist) NOT to see families of program participants at regular Sunday Mass once the beautiful occasion of their First Holy Communion is over. In our neighbourhoods, it is not unusual to see young Mormons knocking door-to-door, in searing heat or in winter cold, evangelizing. Makes one wonder how our young Catholic can be enthused to be more active in the faith. A large number of kids are always happy to help in soup kitchens, Vinnie's vans, or door-knock appeals. There's something beautiful and Divine in those big hearts willing to serve. In a youth centre whose pastoral care is entrusted to Opus Dei, many young people participate in academic study, cultural activities and projects among people with disabilities, refugees, etc., which foster a culture of service and awareness of others. The activities encourage the practice of principle-centred leadership skills, resilience and positive character development. Young people living that service orientation is such a positive thing!

From M.J: "World Youth Day '08 was a big turning point for me. We should have another one here!" From M.F: "I have always been a cradle Catholic and did not really take my faith seriously, despite being in youth groups and attending weekly Sunday Mass. I remember in high school, telling friends that the Eucharist is just 'pretend' and living a double life. It was not until my faith was constantly challenged in University that I started looking for answers and learning WHY I

believed what I did that my faith was reinvigorated. Thanks be to God I had friends who helped me through my doubts. By learning the catechism and having a regular prayer life, I learnt to love the Catholic Church more and continue to struggle to holiness."

I became friends with a lapsed Catholic who had not been to confession for many years. By spending time with him to find a new job, by helping him write a decent CV, I gained his trust. He eventually made it to confession. It gave me so much joy.

A few years ago, a friend invited my husband and me to a catechism talk at their house (given by a member of Opus Dei). I found the talk so enriching that I've attended regularly since then. I realised how little I knew about our faith. I now attend (with my friends) monthly recollections and annual retreats for women and my husband regularly attends the talks, recollections and retreats for men. Our faith and love for the Lord has grown and deepened as our knowledge of Him continue to grow. We have started our own talk on virtues and catechism in our home where we invite friends so we can share our faith with others. My husband and I have an appreciation and love for the Mass that we have become daily Mass goers. We go to confession regularly. Our prayer life has become richer. We love going to Adoration of the Blessed sacrament, we have become more active in our parish. We have learned to love our work and sanctify it by offering up what we can to our Lord. We are striving to become better parents to our children and better spouses to each other. Our lives have become more meaningful—and it all started with a talk on Catechism and virtues at a friend's house. I am now a member of Opus Dei and my husband is a co-operator. My children went to the PARED schools and I want my grandchildren to have the same formation that the schools offer.

Very specific is my being part of Opus Dei as a co-operator or helper of the Work. Through this, I was able to receive strong spiritual formation through the different doctrine talks, recollections, retreats, and availability to chats with spiritual directors, confession. This also led me into practicing a plan of life wherein Mass becomes a strong focus in my daily life, saying the rosary, doing an examination of conscience and other norms which helps me in my formation. Speaking of Masses, I observed that it is a bit difficult to hear Mass on Mondays and Wednesdays due to limited schedules. It will be great if this is something that can be looked into.

As a young Christian (High Anglican in the UK) the faith community I was part of including our priest celebrated the "new" Feast of the Assumption contrary to the wishes of the Anglican hierarchy. Our priest had his faculties withdrawn and our Church was razed to the ground but that faith community lived on and while many are now with God its charism lives on.

My wife and I practice the faith but our children do not. They have not married in the Church, our grandchildren have not been baptised. This is a common experience among our friends.

The last few years in my present parish have shown me how a parish can have a broad base of active contributors who voluntarily take the lead in various ministries, some of which are directly religious—e.g. sacramental program, together with other ministries which are more socially based, widening the links between those who come to Mass (and some who don't) so that support structures for those in need in their everyday lives can be available as needed—even as simple as having a cuppa together after Mass, making connections that are not necessarily made by just being in the Church at the same time as others, but not really connecting. This has given

me, at age 82, a chance to be there in a small way for others I meet at morning Mass, even just saying Hello, how are you? Etc. especially when sickness or death touch the people concerned. I feel that in these little ways I am really a part of the parish and not just someone who just comes to Mass and does not connect with the others who are there at the same time.

After travelling around Australia, I found the issue was within me! I attended a charismatic prayer meeting. Wow! How the Church was changed after leaving it for 14 years. It was suggested to me to get in contact with a priest called Father [ - ] who was with the Disciples of Jesus, what great teaching of the Church for the next 12 years including attending Pastoral Training school for many years. I took one year off work to study at the Evangelisation school, which pushed me further into the arms of Jesus, knowing when and how to use the spiritual gifts under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I need attend the Emmaus Prayer Group every Sunday night, which allows me to continue to sing songs of praise to myself for the remaining week. Without the intervention of the charismatic community, I would still be lost in the worldly things of this live, trying to fill the void which only Jesus can fill. At work, I continue to have polite conversations with Muslims about the role of Jesus in our world today and forever.

My first show of interest in the PC2020 process was when I attended an event organised by Catalyst for Renewal and The Grail at the Sydney Conservatorium on Sunday 9 September 2018. John Allen Jr came out from the USA to tell us what we could expect of Pope Francis given his recent track record. It was positive but cautioned not to expect too much too soon, even while we strove ahead for that. The following night, I was looking at my emails and somehow decided to look up the PC2020 website. First, I read something but then listened to the Archbishops [ - ] and [ - ] speak on their YouTube addresses on the site. The process that was outlined quite inspired me. My heart was gladdened by the time I had heard the videos and took in that key question “What is GOD asking of us in Australia at this time”. Not what did I want directly but put the focus on God first and foremost. This was not to be a process of trying to manipulate or force change or to complain or distance myself or to be focused on the huge task at hand, the hugeness of the change that is required. It was a time to focus on humility, working together. I wrote in my journal, “Do I seriously believe that the Spirit is with me, with everyone, with the Church and wants and years to be listened to, have its promptings followed—or is this all about me and what I want, think I want? Where is the wisdom in that latter approach? If I do believe that the Spirit does yearn to move us all towards wholeness—though we are all at different stages of the journey and have different and diverse needs in some ways – what is the Spirit giving priority to in all of this? What is the next step for us as a Church from God’s point of view? Surely listening deeply is essential, vital, so crucial—yes the Spirit works in all of us—listening, dialoguing together, praying together. We can’t go past that! This is the essence of being a believer, a Christian, of our relationship with God, as person and as a community. Yes, it is possible—it’s a great opportunity! And yes, do I believe that this same listening is what is required in my life and my issues of concern ...? What I should do, engage in and what not? Start here! Yes, I see that I have not taken the guidance and influence of the Spirit in my life and in the life of us as a community too seriously at all really—funny that! Why is that about? But God does want something of me, our local community, our Church in Australia! Aim, desire to tap into that, be in that flow! —and God in others—not necessarily in everything they say and do—is the essence, it seems. Thus true

conversation. Five days later, I continued my journaling: "I reminded myself that what seemed to be the realisation I had a few days ago was that You are passionately, keenly constantly desiring / yearning for our wholeness, the healing of our woundedness, which is simultaneously Your woundedness. (the rest of this is above in the questions box)

Overseas immersion experiences in the developing world, especially East Timor and Sri Lanka. These were run for teachers in the [ - ] diocese but have now ceased. My wife and I taught in ET for 3 months and have returned many times. The experience taught me about Christ's preferential option for the poor. Something like this should be a mandated experience for priests. These experiences took me out of my comfort zone and made real the gospel teaching of reaching out to the poor and disadvantage.

At school, there are very few young people like myself who are fully devoted to their faith and it sometimes makes it hard for me to share my faith. However, through going to World Youth Day in Panama earlier this year, I was able to meet heaps of young people my age in my area that are just as devoted as me. These friends of mine have allowed me to stop being ashamed of being a proud Catholic and I am able to be involved in more events, such as youth group, through them.

Travelling to other countries has influenced my faith. I was very moved by attending Mass in Saigon, Vietnam. I was expecting the liturgy to be not up-to-date, but no. The Church was filled with people of all ages, including many young. The celebration was joyful, and most people sang. This was a country under communist rule! Again, in Rheims France, we attended an Easter Mass. It too was joyful, and the prayers and hymns were led prayerfully by a young woman in the pulpit. In East Timor, the faith of these formerly persecuted people was tangible. Back in Asia, in the Philippines, the Church was packed inside, spilling outside, for the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. It was a moving experience seeing all the devout faces and prayerfulness of the people of all ages. The same occurred in Singapore, but Buddhists and others joined all the Catholics! These experiences gave me a profound sense of the Spirit at work in the whole world, drawing people of all cultures to union in Christ and reverencing the Father.

My faith started when my parents had me baptised as Catholic. As I grew up in the Philippines, it has been my Mother who mostly influenced me to be faithful to the Catholic Church. Her prayerful life and encouraging us to pray the Holy Rosary everyday has been my pattern until now. Being part of a Church organisation also helped me to stay in my faith, Choir and the Legion of Mary. I've been a member of an apologetic group but I prefer to stay in the Legion of Mary. It strengthens my knowledge on what is the role of Our Blessed Lady in our redemption. When I came to Australia, our parish priest in [ - ], [ - ], even more reinforced my faith because of the Eucharist. His reverence to God, his conviction to make people give that reverence, too, to the Eucharist made me understand and know the intimacy of God's love for all mankind.

I have been a daily Mass goer for most of my adult life and what has shaped my faith is the ongoing love of Jesus in the Blessed sacrament with which I cannot do without as it sustains me and strengthens me and helps me to know the truth, which sets us free.

Of all my faithfulness and honest to him, He answered my prayer.

I am blessed to belong to a wonderful parish that gives me an opportunity to participate in various ministries, e.g. music and the preparation of children for the sacraments. It is a parish that has, and continues, to nurture my faith. It is also a parish that has many opportunities for prayer, outside of the Mass, e.g. exposition, Rosary, Lenten groups etc. I would also like to mention that I am a teacher at a local Catholic primary school. I have also taught in the state system and at a Catholic High school. I think of St Mary of the Cross Mackillop a lot, and her wonderful work, in reaching out to the marginalised and 'unchurched'. It is my hope that Catholic schools continue this missionary zeal, but with faithfulness to the teachings of the Church. Without this, Catholic schools 'reason for being' as an alternative to a good, but secular education provided by the state schools is lost. I write these last comments with some concern, because I know a large number of children, from very good families, in my parish, who are missing out on an education at school. They are being kept at home for 'home-schooling'. That is why I want Catholic schools to always be authentically Catholic- a place where all parents can send their children to with faith and trust.

When I moved to the Blue Mountains, I was introduced to SGS nuns (Sisters of the Good Samaritan). It was a revelation to me that so much could be achieved by so few. I also realised what an infinitely better state the Church would be in if women held leadership / decision-making roles. I also joined [ - ] parish and realised what a positive and wide-reaching effect one remarkable parish priest could have (Fr [ - ]).

I have had different experiences, good and bad, with clergy and laypeople. One of the facts that remain with me is that when I see a priest or a nun wearing their habit I feel the presence of God regardless of who they are or what they do. I believe that the habit testifies to God and prompts young people to consider Holy Orders. Throughout our Church's history, in times of crisis, she has always turned to Eucharistic Adoration. I pray that all Churches in Australia will have daily adoration during and for the week before and after the plenary council. For some it may seem like a task beyond practicality, for others "nothing is impossible for God".

I am a cradle Catholic that grew up in youth groups. After I finished high school, I felt a desire to learn more about God but was unable to find any Catholic Bible studies around. I had to resort to a Protestant Bible study in order to learn about the Bible. It was only when I by chance attended a Catholic theology/doctrine class on the existence of God that I was blown away and felt like I had finally found what my soul had been searching for. This encounter was the beginning of my journey into deepening my faith. I want to include this story as I truly believe in the power of intellectually engaging young Catholic with philosophy, theology and doctrine (in line with Church teachings). If the intellect is engaged, the heart will be more willing to follow, and the young Catholic's faith will not waver simply because they no longer "feel like it".

- youth retreat—family retreats —faith formation for mothers and fathers —youth formation

I signed up for a Lenten session with my local Church and when I attended, I was the only one who it became a one-on-one session for 5-6 weeks. This really allowed me to deepen my faith and was the turning point in my life. I sent my kids to a private Catholic school after that. Their faith formation was so good that I was actually learning from them and was able to attend school-based events that allowed me to deepen my faith even more. Forming the faith of young people will have a domino effect on their family so the Church should never underestimate this. One day,

one of my daughters told her father to go to confession because she will be heartbroken to be in heaven and see her father in hell. That was a truly powerful comment that left my husband speechless. I am fortunate that I have a group of women who catch up every month for faith formation as it makes us better Catholic to be equipped to know our faith to allow us to be in a position to share as well as defend our faith / practices to other Christian denominations and non-Christians.

I look at my local parish ([ - ], [ - ]) and see the dynamic of it ... it's pumping with life and joy!! I love bringing my kids to Church and for them to be active members within their parish and greater community. But it scares me to think my kids might not feel this joy and pride once they are in the outside world because we are labelled as "they are Catholic"!!! For some reasons we are frowned upon for our Catholicism. I feel that the Australian Catholic Church needs to remarket itself in a positive way to the wider community and to show everyone that we are still valid and have a right to practice our faith without being criticised or looked down upon just because we defend what's right on issues such as, abortion, same sex marriages, the family unit and other issues.

My faith has grown immensely through the frequent reception of the sacraments. The Church needs to focus on the sacraments!

My faith journey has flourished by being involved in community group and participating in faith formation events in our parish and other parishes. My experience is a testament that the laity must be involved in the life of the Church by being active in the service of the Church, by reaching out to people of all walks of life, even those of different faiths, bring the love of Christ to those who are neglected, lonely or in difficult situations. The support and direction of the priests matter a lot in the success of community groups. I learned that we give glory to God by being holy. Spiritual formation, prayerful life and apostolate works and spiritual guidance from our priests are steps taken. Encourage and support others to join Church groups that will help in their spiritual journey and share your experiences of God's love in your life. Devotion to the Mother of God, Mary most Holy and to the saints.

I am so grateful that in Australia, we have the freedom to practice our faith. I believe in God's Love and Mercy. As a young man, I use to miss Mass on Sundays, I found myself in a lot of trouble. But since I started returning to Mass, I now have all that I need, and living a happy life. I have met a lot of wonderful people through Church who helped me and give me good advice. My parent brought us up in the Catholic faith. And I can see God's love and peace in my family. And I believe that our Catholic Faith is the only thing worth passing on to our children and the future generation of my family. May God bless Cardinal Pell and his Church in Australia.

I became a Catholic as an adult, and am still very much in love with Christ and His life giving teachings. It has been a joy to meet and learn from so many people of different styles and experiences of piety and practice, I have loved learning from a rich variety of traditions, rites and cultures, but it has been disheartening to discover so many people entrusted to teach, administer and even lead in our Church who clearly do not believe, teach or love Christ or his teachings. We almost need to evangelise our own staff and structures before we can talk to anyone else! It is very difficult to fit in as a convert. I love learning the beautiful life giving teachings of the Church, which means that half the Catholics I meet denounce me as "conservative" but I am not bound by

any particular piety, so they sometimes consider me a liberal. I do not belong to a political group, and so I am often denounced by left and right for upholding the rights of the refugees, retirees, families, minorities and the unborn. I love the rich liturgical and literary heritage of the Church, but I do not believe that rigidly adhering to a particular form will preserve these in a dynamic way. These things should be stock standard for Catholic, but we seem to have so little confidence our unique position of standing up for ALL those who are vulnerable, that we feel the need to align with an external political party or movement, which often promotes only part of the goods.

I am of Maori descent from the Bay of Plenty in New Zealand. I grew up in a devout Catholic Family; I attended Church regularly with my mother, my father and 5 brothers and sisters. I attended Christian Studies at the local Church throughout my school years including [ - ] College, Hamilton NZ. Our Catholic roots go back over 7 generations. My 4 x great grandfather and great grandmother were married by the very highly esteemed Bishop [ - ] ... Being Catholic felt inherently innate. However ... this did not mean I did not stray off the path; indeed not. I was permitted dispensation to marry a non-Catholic (39 years together now). We had 2 children who were bought up since birth as Catholic. We attended a very warm, loving Maori Catholic Church on a small island before moving to Australia in 1993. My children and I felt so foreign in the large Sydney parish we attended. We found the atmosphere very cold and clinical. After several years there; we barely knew any of our fellow Churchgoers. Then after attending Confirmation Classes with both children and later official ceremony with other family members who attended in support. After speaking with my son (the older of the two) 'How did he feel now that he was confirmed?' At 14, he responded, "It confirmed I didn't want to be Catholic." Many earnest discussions later he explained he didn't want to be part of a Church where other parishioners barely acknowledged us ... for him the nicest person in the Church at that time was his favourite priest, a young man who was also his favourite Teacher (Christian Living Classes) at the local high school. We were fortunate enough to attend his Ordination when he became a priest. For these reasons I drifted away for 15 years or so. Although I continued to pray and talk daily to God the Father, The Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, I always felt like a practising Catholic, I thought like a Catholic and on special occasions even went to Mass. I have only recently returned. I now attend regularly, I easily interact with other parishioners only because Mass is carried out in Maori. I experience so much warmth, camaraderie and joy. I am amongst like-minded Catholics. I truly feel God's presence and love so much stronger now. I feel like I have simply come home.

My daughter grew up as an active Catholic. When they were nine she and a friend wrote a letter to our then Bishop asking why they could not be altar servers. In time, they were allowed to act as altar servers and she performed this role for several years. In later adolescence, she was involved in a Catholic youth group and developed in her faith alongside her peers. As she grew into adulthood she found attendance at our local Church less and less relevant to her. She began to question the role of women in the Church and could not understand that in all other facets of her life she had equal opportunities with men but in the Church this wasn't the case. She wanted to be married in the Catholic Church and found a wonderful priest whose approach to the wedding ceremony was inclusive and whose genuine faith-filled approach was a source of inspiration to her and her husband as well as to many friends and family were not believers. A year after her wedding her brother (our son) was killed tragically. Our local parish was a great source of support

to us all and his funeral Mass, concelebrated by our current and previous parish priests, was also an occasion of evangelisation to many who attended. When our daughter's first child was born, she was very keen for her to be baptised into the Church. This was an underwhelming occasion. The priest (an overseas recruit) was very difficult to understand and did not engage with the families of the children being baptised. No doubt this man was a sincere and good man but he was not the right person to be officiating at this important opportunity for evangelisation. When her second child was born, she still wanted her to be baptised. This experience, however, was even worse. Once again an overseas priest officiated. This man had no understanding of the needs of the congregation. He spoke in an unintelligible accent for over 50 minutes and posed highly confronting questions to the Godparents, "Whose fault will it be if this child does not come to Church?" My daughter, her husband, many of their young friends and family were completely turned off. They have not been to Church since. These stories of our life demonstrate both how wonderful parish life can be (our daughter's wedding, the support after our son's death) and how negative parish experiences can be. I am not suggesting that locally grown priests are any better or holier than their overseas counterparts but they are more likely to understand the culture in which they are operating and to provide appropriate spiritual nourishment. I am greatly saddened that the negative baptismal experiences have so negatively impacted upon my daughter and her husband as well as their friends and younger relatives. A whole generation of young Catholic people are missing out on the riches of their faith because of the lack of understanding and responsiveness on the part of the institutional Church.

I joined the Catholic Church as an adult. This Church has backbone. This Church has stances on abortion, euthanasia, divorce and so many other areas that NO ONE else has. We must stop trying to apologize for what we are. The Catholic Church is the one bastion in our world of hurt that has answers: but we must not waver. This Church has remained for 2000 years despite being run by humans. God is with us and we must follow His commandments and live His Word. We MUST love, know and serve Him. We must give those seeking the Truth an unrepentant, steady answer. We must.

My name is [ - ] and with my husband [ - ] I have lived in [ - ] for 53 years. My life started in country NSW when I was born into an extremely religious Catholic family. Two of my aunts were Sisters of Mercy and eight first cousins entered religious life. My father had similar numbers of relatives who were religious. Growing up Catholic in the '40s and '50s was a fairly grim business with an emphasis on sin, suffering, penance and there was a lot of fear. We were taught to love God but I found it difficult to love a God who was always checking up on me, knowing my every action and even my thoughts and even a devout person could sin by not carrying out positively good deeds, the so-called "sins of omission". Our relationship with people of other faiths was mostly confined to neighbours and workmates and our attitudes must have been deeply offensive to these good people especially when we couldn't take part in any of their celebrations that involved a non-Catholic Church. Catholic went to school together, (it was a sin for parents to send their children to state schools!) we socialised together and if we were lucky enough to go to university we sought Catholic friends and eventually married a Catholic. But we Catholics had the answers and it wasn't until my four children were growing up that I started to question whether I was always right. So I went on as a dutiful Catholic doing things that were acceptable for a

Catholic wife and mother: doing the flowers and singing in the choir and eventually reading at Mass until 1981 when our parish priest of thirteen years moved on not realising that he wouldn't be replaced. As a parish community we resisted being closed down or absorbed into another parish and so we pulled together to try and keep things going. The PP of Leura was our administrator but we in [ - ] were pretty much on our own. The priests who supplied us over the next almost 6 years were very supportive of the laity. You can imagine my surprise when one of them asked me to write the Prayers of the Faithful while he was on holidays and when he returned he said "You'll keep on doing it won't you" I couldn't believe that one of the clergy would have so much faith in me ... I wasn't a priest or even a nun, but, with other parishioners, I continued to write the prayers for 18 years. Later that year in 1985, I was invited with two other ladies to become a Minister of the Eucharist, the first in our parish. All of this had a positive effect on me; these priests were truly life giving and I started to have a brighter view of the Church. I wasn't just dutiful but someone who was truly involved and could make a positive contribution. Not everyone was pleased with these changes and when I had the great joy of giving Communion to my mother she told I'd be better off at home defrosting the freezer. (See additional material) Over time my view of God became less frightening and I'm now convinced that the God who is Goodness and ...

Some of us in the group are Maronite Catholic, and we believe that the reverence shown in the Maronite Mass is beautiful. We attend both Maronite and Roman Catholic Churches in our area, although we are selective in the Roman Catholic Church's we attend due to the lack of tradition and reverence shown. We have always been Catholic, but only really came to fully understand our faith in our adulthood after meeting other adults in the faith who helped us to really understand Church history, the catechism and the significance of the Eucharist and Mass. We only wish that catechism in primary school and high school was better and taught us more earlier on. Those of us with young children have made it our duty to ensure they won't miss out. Although, we can admit that Catholic schools have improved in what is being taught and how much is taught per week compared to 20+ years ago.

I have attended a number of excellent evening presentations and weekends organised by the menALIVE ministry, which is trying to bring men back to the Catholic Church. This organisation deserves the wholehearted support of the Church hierarchy!

I grew up in the parish of [ - ] back in the day when priests were appointed for life. Fr [ - ] knew all the congregation by name. As he aged so did parishioners and he was able to visit and connect with them in local nursing homes. As he got older, a younger priest came in as administrator and connected with the parish school and the next generation. The local priest was a friend and support. I can only assume the Catholic Church abandoned this practice to support offending perpetrators of sexual abuse and the mistaken belief they would stop offending if moved to a different location. Parish priests serving long terms gain the trust of the community and are better able to support grieving parishioners.

When [ - ] parish was formed some years ago, nobody listened to the local group. They just sold 2 Church sites and 32 acres of land and then told us we had to buy the current site, all money from the sale going to Castle Hill and elsewhere. The local group representing the local people wanted a simple Church that would accommodate the people and a school. We have a primary and

secondary school now. BUT we need a new Church and the design and plans were dictated by [ - ] again. PLEASE listen to the people not just taking our money. We have a very supportive and caring community, keep it this way.

My experience of faith in the Church has been enhanced in leading a prayer group in the parish, by explaining the word of God, followed by the prayer of the rosary and light refreshments when finished. Many people have come to know love and serve the Lord more closely as they understand the teachings through the Sunday Gospels. As they enjoy and grow close in being in a community it also helps them to know that when and if they have a need for prayer or support in any way we are there to support them.

I have a brother who has been divorced and been with a partner for forty years who is not a Catholic but is accepted by the family and they have been together for over thirty years while he is still a faithful Catholic.

I am a Catholic priest engaged full-time in interfaith relations, specifically Christian-Muslim relations, for a number of years. I have been introduced to mosque communities "as a friend of the Muslim community". I would love Catholic to befriend their Muslim co-workers, neighbours and fellow citizens. One day I was one of a trio—a rabbi, a priest and an imam—presenting to senior students at a public school. Between classes we had a break, so the imam invited us to have a coffee. We walked down the street and into a cafe. As we walked in together, the rabbi, the priest and the imam, one of the customers exclaimed, "Wow, this is great! This should be happening more often!" We ordered our coffees and sat down. As we were chatting, the man came over to us and asked, "May I take your photo? I want to put it on Facebook." His request made me glad, that he recognised that it was important for rabbis, priests and imams to be seen together, to be seen chatting together, to be seen as friends to each other. But his request also made me sad. The fact of a rabbi, a priest and an imam having coffee together should not be "news". It should be normal. It should be part of everyday life.

My life experiences have helped shape who I am: To begin—I was born into a traditional Filipino Catholic family in [ - ]. Went to Catholic schools for all of my education. Went to Mass every Sunday, did weekly family rosary, involved in Filipino community at our parish ([ - ] [ - ]), etc. My sister and I were even blessed to be chosen to greet Pope (St.) John Paul II during the beautification in [ - ] Cathedral in 1995! This all changed when my dad passed away to a mystery illness at the age of 43. I was 14, my sister was 12 and my mother was left alone to raise us all by herself. But she had her Faith. She had such a deep faith in knowing that no matter what, if we lived our life close to God, we would be with him again, with the saints, with our Blessed Mother and of course with God! This kept us together and despite our sorrows, we stayed in the faith. I continued on in life, but with us now having moved interstate to Sydney had left all my childhood friends and now in a new parish (without a Filipino Community) started to be disconnected in my faith. Was not part of any youth group or movement (not being in the west of Sydney, had no connection with groups such as YFC, Antioch etc.). Still went to Mass (my parish of [ - ], [ - ]), but felt increasingly disconnected—but still had an inner pull that there was something more to my faith but didn't really acknowledge it. It wasn't until WYD2008 when my sister and I decided to answer the call of our parish priest to help out as we were to host pilgrims from Spain! We said yes, only then later we found out majority would be from Hong Kong—at first we thought oh no,

we won't be able to speak with them. But still stayed on. We ended up going to WYD08 in Sydney and haven't looked back! We were founding members of the youth of the parish, and are still in it as senior youth leaders—mentoring the younger leaders And we are still involved in youth ministry, not just in the parish but also in assisting the [ - ] Diocese and assisting elsewhere when able. The past 7 years have been involved in the Good Friday Passion Play at the [ - ] [ - ], [ - ]. I am one of the Roman Officers! I am also blessed in having been selected to be a small group leader for World Youth Day in Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Krakow and Panama City. I have witnessed so many young people as a leader, not just from my diocese but from around the world—able to witness the Faith as it is—universal, passionate and very much alive. Being a former teacher, I have a passion to share my knowledge in something I love—the faith. I really do want to share my faith where able, even if within a context of the Laity. Even with the current struggles of the Church today, I actually feel strengthened in my faith. I know that in the past we struggled, I believe we live again in the age of Martyrs. We need to stay strong. Follow Mary and the saints!

Some years I was a friend of a family where the mother and father both died (young) within 3 years. At the time, we had no parish priest and as the teenagers of the family were attending the Anglican youth group I went to the Anglican minister to ask if he could counsel them. I was stunned when he said to me, "Why can't you do it?" It had never occurred to me and I realised that was not how Catholics were encouraged to think.

My sons have a daily Mass available in their school which they try to attend when possible. This greatly helps in their pastoral care in a daily basis for better formation. In turn, this school has had many students that have continued onto priestly vocation.

I got married at 23 in registry office, we had 2 children old enough to learn piano so we have sent them to Polish nun for lessons. Once she found out I came from Poland she got me involved in Church's work. One important part was reading the Bible, and you know I continue to read on to this present time.

A) The teaching of MORTAL sin has had a fearful and confusing effect on me as a child and a profound effect on many people I know, and hold close, who rather than see it as a problem teaching have discarded the Catholic teaching in its entirety. The difficulty to reconcile a punitive GOD with a loving all merciful GOD along with other issues, is a contradiction the Catholic Church has used as a manipulative and controlling weapon against its people. The Church has a responsibility if it wishes to regain any respect to fix this problem urgently. The most affected are the oldest generation nearer life's end, and those that have already left the faith. The elderly would surely find peace sooner from scruples and fear if the Church repented of its erroneous teaching and begged forgiveness. B) The absolute ELITISM, superiority and arrogance of the hierarchy of the Church at times of formality is a replica of the Bibles description of the Pharisees. As a young child I was always acutely aware of this hypocrisy and found it very difficult to involve myself in any formality with in the Church. For example: kissing the bishops ring. Despite this gesture being one of respect of the office—the gesture is not one befitting a Church of the people and should be dropped all together. Currently the Church and its hierarchy deserve NO respect. For example : Following formal Mass the Bishops and Cardinals stuck with the pomp and ceremony and stayed in the safety of 'important' people, and refused the challenge to try and relate to regular people. C) There are very few examples of true humility and often those

examples are in people who have spoken out and then been quietened or ostracised by the Church. These people are not self-promoters and often avoid the lime light. Self-promoters should be considered with the utmost of caution and see it for what it is – ambition. It is dangerous in the wrong hands. D) Over the years I have noticed that the times the community of people were asked for their input, as the Plenary Council is now, it was approached often with excitement, but in my view the outcome was an absolute disappointment. A few words here and there and a few gestures were changed. My worry here with this Plenary Council is that the same thing will happen and a few people will be happy with the ‘changes’. The larger community will wonder what all the fuss was about as nothing has changed and the Church leaders will kid themselves that they've done something special.

I am a person who as a teen had no interest in the faith. I went to keep my parents happy and it wasn't until I was 18 that I gained a love of the faith for myself. This happened as I was part of a community that while not perfect, showed me real love and gave me a chance to use my gifts and talents. I came back originally as I had friends around me but overtime, it was seeing God work in my life and the lives of my friends that really drew me in and from there, I've grown in my faith and now am involved in several movements and parishes to help grow others faith and lives towards Christ.

I spoke to my three children (aged 21, 19 and 17) about this. All have attended Catholic primary and secondary schools. Until recently, all attended weekly Mass with me but see no point in continuing to do so because they do not relate to what is going on. I posed the above questions to them and this is what they said. \*priests should stop raping children. \*Too much emphasis on peace and love—without any action. \*The Church is more like a cult—all about love and positivity. \*Pray and you'll be saved—rubbish. \*People feel obliged to go to Mass and donate. \*Don't want to be at Mass—boring and uninteresting. \*People shouldn't feel forced to go, Religion shouldn't be forced. \*Mass has no relevance to real life. \*Too many old people at Church. \*Look at Hillsong—they've got lots of young people. What are they getting right that the Catholic Church isn't?

God is love and all who live in love live in God.

I am a cradle Catholic but when I was about 13-14, I had many doubts about the faith. My parents were devout Catholic and always taught us about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Mary, the Saints etc. I went to a Catholic primary and high school. I didn't share my doubts with anyone. I never found RE lessons very engaging. When I was almost 15 I no longer believed in the Eucharist. I thought that it should really only be symbolic. I was blessed to have had a powerful experience during the Easter Vigil that year that convinced me that the Eucharist was in fact real, and that every crumb from the host was indeed precious. Since that time, I became more involved in my faith. I attended WYD Sydney which was fantastic, I was involved in my Church youth group. I was lucky to have had good pastors at my local parish. Another turning point for me was attending ACYF Melbourne and then a deanery youth camp. These allowed me to witness the power of the Holy Spirit in shaping the lives of youth first hand. Many significant things happened which allowed some of the youth to finally feel the love of God and the fellowship of other Catholic—this put some of them on the right path. These experiences also allowed me to discover my calling to teaching. I also made some great friendships. I am now married and my husband is a 'Traditional

Catholic'. We often attend the Tridentine (Latin) Mass together—this has given me a new perspective on liturgy and tradition. It greatly annoys me that Catholics tend to 'pick a side' and become judgmental—I don't find it helpful that we start labelling ourselves and forgetting that we are all part of one Catholic and Universal Church. It would be great if Catholics incorporated some more 'traditional' practices into their lives e.g. the rosary, Eucharistic adoration, benediction, novenas etc. These have greatly aided my faith and I didn't know very much about them before meeting my husband. I had had good experiences of the Church, but I know many of my family and friends haven't. I think it's important that we share our stories and listen to the stories of others.

I can't ... I can't say that I have had a conversion or experience of faith, all I see is division, resentment and the sense of a darkness surrounding the Church. I can only hope and pray for what is to come.

I have been disheartened to see so many of our clergy and lay people who are satisfied with living a lukewarm expression of their faith. I have met many who are comfortable with knowing Christ from a distance when He has so much for them if they only asked Him for it. On the other end of the spectrum, I have been deeply inspired by the lives of the saints as well as some people who I have met within the Church who truly embody Jesus' call to love Him with all our heart, soul mind and strength. It is this that makes me want to be more like Jesus and come alive in my faith. In short, my experiences of connecting with people who are somewhere on the spectrum between lukewarm and on fire for God has caused me to see which end of the spectrum I would like to be on. Through this, God has also given me a desire to invite others to join me on this journey from being lukewarm to on fire, from complacency to intimacy.

Yes I would like to, and my sharing is about my calling that shaped my life to become a strong Catholic. Before I was called, I am already here in Australia. My life was a mess, I don't know what else is there for me? I used to drink heavily and being away from home, it makes it more difficult and challenging life for me. I have no one to turn to. I do not go to Church because I do not know anyone there. I only see despair and cold hearts in my own account. I could not relate at all so I ended up going out with some friends that are of the same predicament as I am. No direction and no God, I should say not that there is no God but that none in us. I was living as human as it can be, there were no possible means of reversing that. So I spiralled down the drain, aside from accidents, I encountered bad experiences where it makes it even more impossible to improve life. One day I met these people who are very inclined to their faith and they invited me to come and join them but I am not that interested, until one day, God stopped me from what I am doing and I went into a trance where I could not hold onto myself anymore, I lost my strength and suddenly I heard His voice and that is all I can remember, I said, O my God, help me." To make the story short, God restored me after my earnest plea that I promised to serve Him if He brings me back to life. I joined that community that has been inviting me for sometimes, and that is where God remodelled my faith to love Him as He is, I never thought that would happen to me, It changed my whole perspective of who God is to me. He taught me and prepared me as His vessel that he can use one day. There is nothing impossible to God. My experience started to build up but Satan wants to discourage me. I request for a priest to minister to our community here in Australia because I cannot do all by myself. Things were really inspiring until one day that priest

has lost his senses and committed an offense which I don't like to disclose here. I notified the Diocese of the incident and the priest was sent home. Another incident when I was assigned in [ - ], a priest who was in-charge there has fallen in love to this beautiful girl at the age of just seventeen, he got her pregnant and he promised to marry her but the parents disagreed because he is a priest. May God forbid me for sharing this. I can tell the anguish of the Church there, I was rendered speechless when I heard the story of the close family. I was again attacked by the evil ones when one of the priests I accompany here in Sydney ran away with a woman and took also the money of the congregation. Whom shall I trust these days, I said to myself? The other priest was involved with my own family, how disgusting is that? I remember that one condition was given to my community if there is one complaint, then it will be closed down, I was pierced in the heart, I sacrificed for the sake of many, I was bleeding but I gave it to God. There are experiences from top to bottom ...

I personally have had good experiences with the Catholic Church

In a local Catholic high school, the religion teacher told her students that the story of Adam and Eve was a myth because the human is originally a monkey. In another local Catholic school, the catechist told her student that Jesus had siblings. When people send their children to a Catholic school, they expect them to receive the real teaching of the Church, not weird views or strange stories.

I attended a beautiful parish. The priest preached in a matter of fact way of the riches of Catholicism. I learnt about Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother, the Saints, Angels, Miracles and the moral teaching of the Church. It was only leaving this parish, that I noticed how other parishes did not teach the faithful the proper teachings of the Church. It is not by accident that parishes that proclaim the Truth boldly are full and young people attend. A watered-down Catholicism is not what anyone wants. Just look around at empty parishes.

In my youth, I was in a Catholic youth group. This was great in helping me be confident in my faith.

ACYF—it really reiterated to me the importance of the fact that we are Christian 24/7, and not just during Mass, something I feel that parishes fail to do.

I go to Mass because I believe in God and His message. I am very privileged to have the gift of Faith, despite life's treacheries. Lately I feel as though I am considered irrelevant and unable to understand Christ's message with any maturity or deeper meaning. I feel talked down to during the homily. These well-meaning men almost always use American anecdotes and read from homilies that they have sourced from texts and sites for that purpose, and they sound like the texts written on the weekly bulletin. I know that many of our priests are still inexperienced and are practising their preaching skills.

I've had great formation in youth groups (particularly Antioch) and World Youth Day. Without some truly loving and understanding people I wouldn't be walking so closely to God in my footsteps today. I was truly blessed by a parent couple who lived the virtues of acceptance, love, and understanding when they had every reason due to family issues to not be present for me and others. Their outward faith and hope was a great example to follow. I've been truly blessed by seeing the best in a man because of some of the priests I've known. It's a shame that the world is

looking at us for the wrong reasons right now, because I could point to so many great examples of people who truly personify the character of Christ. It's their model which keeps me strong in many up and down seasons as well as giving me something to aspire to. Currently I have found peace in the presence and adoration of the Eucharist that was unfounded in my life before. I feel tremendously lucky to belong to such a great institution that has such profound and deep meaning in their rituals. I would like to think that because of my newfound love of the Eucharist (something someone asked me to try out recently) I have a deeper relationship with Christ I wish I could give to others. Unfortunately, I don't know many people who would love to give up an hour in a weeknight to experience this. It's a shame that people are missing such wondrous moments that the Church has to offer.

In the presence of the Most Holy sacrament of the Altar, and in the silence of adoration and sometimes internal struggles to realise we are only creatures of God ... we find joy and gladness and meaning in this short life.

Whilst I have always been committed to the faith, I often hear from others that Church is boring. Sometimes the priest just doesn't capture the people with their sermons and homing, this is why a lot of people are leaving the Church for the Baptist faith. I have been a Churchgoer my whole life; yet I feel like I can't defend my faith as well as a Baptist. More needs to be done.

I grew up in a traditional Catholic family. My dad was a convert and he brought a different perspective to our understanding of what that meant, but Mum kept us on the right path. Dad believed that he had a personal relationship with his God, that was independent of the Church, but going to Church gave a structure to his expression of his faith. Dad worked hard to put all seven of us children through private Catholic secondary education. I have always continued to practise my faith and we brought up our children up in the same way. However, my faith was sorely tested about in the early 1990s and as a result, most of my siblings now no longer attend Mass. One of my siblings, who was very religious and is still a very spiritual person, was abused for years by certain priests. His life as a result has been very difficult and he considered suicide on a number of occasions. He was groomed along with others, from his early teens and entered an order while he was still very young and had no experience of life as a result of a sheltered upbringing. We knew that something was wrong, but we could not have imagined what the truth was and when we found out about the damage that had been done to him, it was soul-destroying. Those perpetrators were wolves in sheep's clothing and they destroyed not just my brother's innocence, but others as well. The hierarchy of the Church turned a blind eye, as far as we were concerned and went on as if it was the most normal thing in the world. That is why I believe that unless that power-base is dismantled, nothing essential will change. At the grass roots, the Church does so much good, with organisations like St Vincent De Paul and all the other services that the Church offers. It is almost like it is two organisations operating under the same roof. The trouble is that the power-base belongs to the ones who say do as I say, not as I do and that is not right and it is not good enough.

My upbringing in Catholic schools has given me just a small glimpse of what a fruitful faith journey can be. I do wish however that our faith teaching had more prominence in our overall education. I have learnt more of my faith after I left school.

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| <p>I grew up in a Christian family who were very active with our Church of England community. My best friend's father was our minister and the sense of community and fellowship was so strong. He led by example and was one of us. He worked alongside us as we built a new bigger Church, and was so respected by the entire community. His services were incredibly powerful and the messages strong and sound. The focus was never on raiding money and ticking boxes. It was always about the message. As an adult, I met and married a Catholic man. We were married in a Catholic Church and have three daughters, all now attending Catholic schools. We have regretted this path and that is so devastating for us as a family. We have completely lost faith in the Catholic Church. When our eldest completed her Holy Communion we were astounded Confession still exists and the whole process was cold, tick the box, and strictly about the Catholic way. The last 14 years the Catholic Church has shaped us negatively, and has pushed us away. We no longer have faith in the Catholic Church and are seeking a new future.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to unite</li> <li>• Give voice to the Good News</li> <li>• Be more Christ like in our behaviour and more humble as a Church</li> <li>• Consider the types of change which will bring about greater congregations</li> <li>• Reconcile with each other; show forgiveness to those who have transgressed us</li> <li>• Let go of elitism and prejudices</li> <li>• Heal ourselves and help others to heal</li> <li>• Open up the Church to those who have experienced divorce, are gay, suffered abuse etc.</li> <li>• Be a transparent Church</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Good friendships that led me to come to know, love the Church and its teachings. My good friends from many parishes who had sound doctrinal knowledge helped me to know my Faith and including some exceptional priests through the sacraments especially confession.</p>   |
| <p>When I migrated to Australia from a non-English speaking, very Catholic country I eventually went to Church and suddenly felt at home! I felt embraced both by the people and the similarity of the ritual of being invited to "share a meal", no questions asked.</p>  |
| <p>Over the past year, I have experienced a number of life / faith changing things that have allowed me to enter fully into participation in my faith. Prior to 2018, I was at best a Sunday Catholic. However through involvement in Men -Rise Up (US) (Lent 2018), [ - ] [ - ] (NSW), Men's Ministry formed as part of Men Rise up, 90 Days of Renewal (The Catholic Guy—Bruce Downes), which started my Journey of Daily Prayer, Men Alive (Robert Falzon—August 2018) which provided me a rich faith experience. Be Awake Conference (Stanwell Tops NSW, October 2018) which provided support and encouragement for my daily Prayer life. Each experience deepened my faith and enabled me to find Joy and support in my daily struggles and now sees me attending Mass almost daily.</p>  |
| <p>* dealing with conservative and/or controlling priests who think the parish is theirs and they can do as little as they like, while not allowing more active parishioners to take a role in parish life is a real trial for me. My PP has not advocated the Plenary Council at all, and only had the banners up in the Church for two weeks. It has been a battle to get any parishioner involvement in the face of his 'wishing it would all go away because nothing needs to change' attitude, though there have been several privately organised small groups meetings.</p>  |
| <p>I've had the experience of a priest who, from the altar told me off for not wearing a veil. This was a number of years ago but it was hurtful. Another time I was introduced to the parish priest on arriving to teach in the school. He stood on the step above me, I felt like he was towering over me,</p>   |

and left me with my hand extended for what seemed like a very long time, before shaking my hand. These examples, for me, were like signs of 'I have the power'. I've had experiences of welcoming communities, people caring and pastoral priests in some parishes. Overall, I feel that it's the caring, loving and community based experiences that speak to me of Jesus, meeting Jesus and so are one of the supports regarding my faith. People matter more than rigid laws. Laws are needed to help protect us, guide us. Love is at the centre not laws.

I went to [ - ] school for girls and found the Catholic culture in the school very comforting and formative. Having like-minded friends and families and support from a priest on campus with daily Mass was a huge part in my own relationship with Christ. Personally attending adoration was the biggest influence in my growing in relationship and love with Christ and his Church and having my local Churches offer benediction and adoration on different days was really beneficial.

I am a convert to Catholicism. I was raised in the Uniting Church and I was first drawn to the Catholic Church as a 12-year-old, through the Eucharist, at my first school Mass. I was only a kid, but I just knew that whatever was happening up there on that altar was "the real thing". As a young, non-Church going adult, the Eucharist drew me in again, in an almost physical way, when I would be driving past the Catholic Church in the town where I lived and I felt a physical compulsion to stop the car and go inside. Eventually, one day, I did, and I never stopped going to Mass from that day. I celebrate 20 years as a Catholic this Easter (2019). In those 20 years, my faith has nourished me, challenged me, comforted me, and grown me, in ways I couldn't have imagined. For much of those 20 years I have worked for the Church in communications. For all of that time, I have dealt with the reality of the sexual abuse scandal. I have, in that regard, seen the worst of the Church, and it has been sickening. But also, over those years, I have seen so much good in the Church. So many saints. I've covered stories of so many people doing so much good, walking with those in our society who have nobody else to walk with them. I'm constantly humbled by their faith in action. On most days, I have the best job in the world. This is where I find life. In meeting people of faith, in hearing their stories and in telling those stories. "Go out to all the world and tell the Good News." That's what Jesus told his disciples to do. It's what he tells us to do today.

I was raised Catholic, educated by the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St Joseph. I practise the faith, attend Mass and other sacraments, have raised six children through my parish and Catholic schools. Most of my children still practise their faith, some working for Catholic Dioceses. I serve on my local [ - ] Pastoral Council. I am aware that a great many men and women of faith suffer from the effects of abuse by clergy on them or members of their family, whether as children or adults. I also know many people who have suffered ignominy at the hands of parish priests who make unilateral decisions about how things are done in the parish and who can do them. I can see that parishes are losing people through the failure of the Church to respond to crises as Christ would, and to give guidance on current moral issues. I am engaged in efforts to help renew our parish, yet there can be no change there if not lead by the parish priest. I thank God for our Bishop who recognises the need for an end to clericalism. I sometimes feel that my effort is pointless, yet I will not walk away from the faith. I don't want to walk away from the Church because there is hope in my community and great potential in this Plenary Council. As the product of Josephite institutions, I feel empowered to question the status quo, while also compelled to do

something about the need I can see in the Church. I believe the status quo is in dire need of change as soon as possible. I feel there is hope simply because this plenary has been called and we the people are given the opportunity to speak. I pray that the Council organising committee will continue working as it has, and will enable a large number and diversity of women to serve on working groups, and the Plenary Council itself. May God bless us with wisdom and courage, compassion and humility as we work for real and lasting change in the Church in Australia

I started going to Church again in my late 20's after a conversion experience (or a number of them). Thankfully, I met a number of good people in my life who were well catechised Catholic that led me back to Church through their friendship and example. Like me, many others in our group have experience similar things, surrounded by well-formed family and Church parish.

The Church is so big, and I am so small, but my voice is still important. Similarly, God is so great, and I am so small, but He still sees me and loves me as if I am the only one there is to love. I've been involved in youth ministry for almost a decade and the people and experiences I have encountered have definitely shaped me. I've learnt about God's great love for me through the friendships I've created, I've experienced the beauty of charismatic worships and how to use our gifts to glorify the Giver, and so much more. But I felt like there was more. I decided to go to World Youth Day 2019 in Panama because I wanted to experience the greater Church. What I found, amidst the hundreds of thousands of people, was again, that the Church is so big, and I am so small, but God sees me and loves me just as I am. During the opening ceremony, my pilgrimage group sat on a grassy area in a car park between two roads. These roads had barricades and guards along them. We asked the guards if Pope Francis was going to come by and they said no. So we settled our stuff down and awaited for the commencement of the ceremony. Then, all of a sudden, we see the Pope mobile on the big screen going through crowds of people on the way to the main stage. And then, a whole sea of people just started running to one side of the road. And everyone followed. Even though the guards told us that the Pope wasn't going to come by our area, there was still this longing, there was still hope. And then people said the Pope was coming along the other road, so everyone started running and following and jumping and screaming towards the other side. And we continued to go back and forth numerous times, excited and longing and hoping to see the Pope. Eventually, we saw on the big screen that the Pope already made it to the front stage and everyone in my section went back to their patch of grass to prepare and listen to the opening ceremony. Although we were not satisfied with seeing the Pope, it was a beautiful witness to see the longing that young people had. It reminds me of the longing God has for us. If only all people longed for or desired for Christ in the way that we longed to see the Pope. The world would be set on fire. Although we were not fully satisfied with seeing the Pope before the opening ceremony, the desire was fuelled even more. After the ceremony, large crowds gathered on the right side of the road to await for the Pope to pass by. After hours of waiting, he came by for only a few seconds, but the atmosphere was electric. People were cheering, jumping, smiling and shaking. If only we were this desperate to see Jesus in our everyday lives. This witness has shaped my daily longing to be in union with Christ. Ever since I have returned from WYD, my desire to experience Christ has been fuelled and the longing is constant. Perhaps this is the 'more' I have been looking (or longing) for. We can never long for God as much as He longs for us. We must keep longing.

Once, a parishioner told me how her children stopped attending Masses because they could not understand what the priest was saying during homilies due to a different accent. To me, it showed that children expect to learn, understand and love what is going on in the Mass but it also showed me that not even a steadfast, Church-going person may not be equipped enough to lead her own family into a journey of faith. How can we help to bring more family to the Church and have a deep-rooted faith in the Lord? This made me more aware that I myself is also vulnerable and need to build and strengthen my faith, hope and love for the Lord.

- We are all on a different level of our faith journey and we need to be open to how each person honours and practices their faith
- Openness, joyfulness, being the face of God, walk the walk
- Important to have a place of worship and coming together, a parish community, making it more invested in the personal aspects of our faith community
- Spiritual connection and the acceptance and love of the Holy Spirit through clergy who understand. Through this loving and understanding I survived and recovered from severe depression.
- We are all on a different journey, her children have a very different perspective to her background
- Life long journey – words of Jesus: Love one another as I have loved you. Non-judgemental. We are too insular!
- Important to be seen to be practicing Catholic and have a plan of worship – connection to the community. How do we develop the parish Community? Welcoming.
- Young people are not getting involved in the Church. How will they learn to grow into a personal relationship with Jesus?

I belong to a Charismatic Ecumenical community now. I was raised a Catholic and still go to Mass and adoration but need the charismatic side of my faith to strengthen my faith, form me in excellent teachings that are life relevant.

I grew up in a Catholic family who practised their faith but who were also involved in charismatic community. This enabled me to experience the Holy Spirit and receive healing and restoration during my teenage and young adult years that I would otherwise have missed out on. I now have grown to have a strong faith and will pass this onto my children and witness to my friends.

- Lost the meaning of the word “love” and acceptance
- Jesus disappointed in the Church now compared to how Jesus lived
- Church rules are man-made and these are preventing us from going forward
- Getting back to basics; Catholic education system is no longer about education – it’s become a business. Roughly half the kids in the system are not Catholic. Far too many teachers in the system are not educated and practicing the faith.
- We are comfortable but third world people aren’t and appear stronger in faith. Poorer countries are richer in faith
- Media issues with Catholic Church causing people to stay away
- Feeling of guilt by association to the crimes of and by priests/religious.

When I moved out of youth group, I found it a struggle as a young adult to find a space for community. God still found me and encouraged me to listen to podcasts, read books and strive to deepen my faith. However, this was not easy and it was a lot of hard work. I needed community—it's so important. When it became particularly hard, I reached out to a Sister of Mercy of Alma Michigan and she helped me go through my life and allowed me to heal. Being part of a Catholic Basketball team for women in Western Sydney has helped me to be accountable and to strive on and off the court.

World Youth Day 2019 really shaped my faith experience. It was an amazing journey that taught me a lot about my own faith and relationship with God as well as where I want that relationship to go.

- Encounter with Jesus, attended Catholic meeting, changed life; returned to faith.
- Beginning of my return to the faith was WYD2008.
- Abortion may be a defined ruling in our broader secular society but not for Catholics
- In our local high school we have a number of non-Catholic students including Hindus and Muslims. We should our faith led by example; those not of our faith must accept and respect our values. Muslim students disagreed with this, when it was suggested to them that ‘when in Rome you do as the Romans do’ they continued to disagree.
- Conversely, another has a daughter whose friend is Muslim and the Muslim father is very accepting.
- Negativity re Catholicism on social media is very high and obvious
- Experience of marriage, pregnancy, rejection by husband for refusing abortion and becoming a single mother. Took some years but eventually, courtesy of her father whom she obviously loves immensely, she is now practicing her faith again and bringing up her son to do the same.
- Story of an Anglican friend married youngish and the marriage didn’t work out, as the friend says thank goodness there were no children involved. Years after his divorce he had a moment of discernment that led him to the Catholic faith – he wanted to convert. But couldn’t because he was a divorcee from an Anglican marriage. He’s now married (secular marriage) to a divorced Catholic. Oh, they both go to Catholic Mass every weekly (at least) sing in the choir and yes she takes Holy Communion. The person telling this story finished it with “... and they’re both better Catholic than me!”
- Some years after I got married I bumped into the priest who married me. He was so happy that I was still married!
- The kids of today seem to have been much better taught than we were in our time and seem to have more knowledge about religion than we did as younger people. Does this translate into faith?

I, like many people, have a lot of suffering in my life. My family have been tortured by sexual abuse, alcoholism and drug addiction. My son is in jail, again. If I didn’t have Faith and trust in God how would I have survived? So many people have mental health issues and are on antidepressants. For some of our friends, life was just too hard and they took their own lives. Prayer—the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet, daily reflections on Divine Mercy, the Surrender prayer, Mass and the sacraments. Faith in God has sustained us. I thank God for the gift of Faith.

- Need to unite
- Give voice to the Good News
- Be more Christ-like in our behaviour and more humble as a Church
- Consider the types of change which will bring about greater congregations
- Reconcile with each other; show forgiveness to those who have transgressed us
- Let go of elitism and prejudices
- Heal ourselves and help others to heal
- Open up the Church to those who have experienced divorce, are gay, suffered abuse etc.
- Be a transparent Church
- Married 10 years, wife was Church of England. Felt marginalised because of the divorce and remembered the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding divorce and marriage. Understood the sacredness of marriage and did not consider finding a new partner. Four grandchildren do not go to Mass. My concern is that the teaching and sacredness of marriage is not being carried on.
- Grandchildren don’t know Church
- Friend marginalised by Church – I lost my friend
- Personally experienced marginalisation because husband had left her. The Church’s response was not to acknowledge her because she’s a divorcee. She has a gay son and feels that people have deserted her and her son

because of her son's sexual orientation. Her experience is that the Church did not welcome them.

- Personal experience of homosexual friends...one is faithful to the Church and one has left.

Generally, am greatly appreciative of the opportunities to frequent the sacraments, especially Communion and Confession, offered by the Church and to have been married in the Church. Count it as a blessing to have the friendship of clergy. Moving liturgical celebrations, especially according to the 1962 Missal during the Easter Triduum.

As I am a practicing Christian, I have assisted with Scripture teaching and enjoyed teaching the young children at the Public schools.

Encourage people to share positive stories. The change in my life after 5 years as a Catholic has been strong and very positive. So strong and positive that my "Happy Heathen" husband happily drives me to Mass, because he has seen the positive change in my life.

I was once a Sunday Catholic, but a priest gave a sermon once about how much closer we get to God through daily Mass (or at least trying to get to Mass more than once a week). Since making a commitment to get to at least two Masses a week, my Faith has grown and I feel absolute joy and peace every time I attend Mass. I never felt this as a Sunday Catholic. I have also been motivated to do more for others as a result ... possibly because I want to act out my Faith more.

I pray we capture the youth, without them we have no future

When I was at school, we had the catechism which we had to learn off by heart. These days, this idea is ridiculed as being "indoctrination", but it gave us a firm basis of doctrinal truths that we could build our lives around. Things that you learn as a child stay with you all your life. Therefore, sound traditional Catholic doctrine should be taught to primary school children.

I have grown up in South Africa, but since moving to Australia I have been brought do much closer to God and truly see the value of our faith in my community. My children were accepted into a Catholic school and our school is dedicated to guiding us as parent to teach our children about our Catholic faith, and also to teach us as parents how to be good Catholic parents. I see the blessings in my children and how they are growing in their love for God. How they are closer to the community and have learnt to sacrifice for the better of others. In Australia I find there are more people proud to be Catholic and many who stand for our faith which is not always the same in my home country. I love the sense of community. I am blessed to be able to attend Mass regularly and always be able to find a Church open and a priest willing to do confession.

I grew up attending a weekly Catechesis run by a nun in Sydney's inner suburbs. Each Friday afternoon after school we would gather into age groups and attend a small class with 3-6 other children of the same age and learn the Baltimore Catechism and other texts related to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. When I reached teenage years we would discuss moral dilemmas and how the Catechism and Philosophy could help navigate right and wrong in complex situations. It was practical and engaging and gave me a solid understanding of the Catechism and basic moral philosophy. This has helped me in adulthood particularly when explaining the difficult teachings of the Catholic Church to those who are not familiar with the Catechism whether they be from a protestant background or even a Catholic background but were never formed in their

faith. It helps me now as a parent to know how to explain to my children why we follow the Church's teaching when others around us do not.

My experiences in a bush community where the locals often had to run services themselves. These were usually more uplifting than what they normally had.

We would like to share the following YouTube videos from Fr Richard Rohr which changed our lives, and know how they can change so many people's lives: "Becoming Stillness"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TGS-JD80nE> "Contemplative Prayer"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPb3Z51gLcY> "Come and See"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOyMwwIYScY>

My name is [ - ] and, as a youth leader of [ - ] Eucharistic Youth, I would like to share my story of being a part of this youth group and how God continues to work in my life. I was first introduced to the youth group in 2007 (when I was 15 years old) when there was growing interest in attending WYD 2008 in Sydney. We were encouraged to attend formation talks prior to World Youth Day. These talks were intriguing as we learned about what it meant to be a human person, why the Catholic Church was the true Church and what it meant to have a personal relationship with God. Thus, I endeavoured to learn more about my faith and was deeply encouraged to learn alongside my fellow youth mates. Over the years, I grew in my interior life and learned more about morality and truths of the Catholic faith. I fostered a love for Mother Mary, the saints and the Church. There were strong senses of consolation from God I experienced in the early years of my faith journey. However, as time and life progressed, there were also experiences of desolation where God's love didn't spark the effervescent joy I once knew. Nevertheless, I recognised and learned that there was a strong sense of responsibility and duty to continue formation in the interior life and to pass that on to others. I slowly started to take up responsibilities in the parish youth group. I volunteered as a social director, fundraising coordinator and youth leader for our Jnr Youth Club. As a youth group, our foundation is on the Eucharist—as God gives himself wholly, with love, in the most vulnerable sense. We believe that there is a desire to know God through deep doctrinal and intellectual formation. We make it a priority to catechise and teach the youth of the parish, as it is what will form faithful Catholic for the future Church. It has become an integral part of my service to the Church and the rest of the community to serve in this youth group. Although, I must state, that I wouldn't be able to do this without God's grace received in the sacraments and in Eucharistic Adoration. I am now the coordinator for the youth and young adults of our parish in Rooty Hill. It has been an incredible and joyous time of service. However, it comes with its struggles and obstacles but God's grace has always overcome. I am deeply moved by how He has touched the young people in our parish and continues to sustain the fruitfulness of our apostolate. As I continue to serve God and our parish community, I am encouraged by the words of St. Josemaria Escriva, "Love means deeds—not sweet words". It is by God's love, love of the Eucharist and love of service that the youth leaders of [ - ], [ - ] continue to strive for holiness.

Born in 1969, my Catholic school education (Dioceses of [ - ] ) was entirely inadequate to prepare me for my future as a faith filled and committed Catholic. My parents, family, parish priests, parishioners and chosen friends were my faith formative influencers. In my opinion, the future of the Catholic Church mostly depends on the faith commitment of the next generation (our children and grandchildren). In this modern age of fractured families (at best) and the dissolution of the

family unit altogether (at worst), we need the Catholic education system to deliver high quality faith instruction from Kinder to Year 12. Based on my raising of two children who recently completed the HSC in 2017 and 2018 respectively, my recommendation is an overhaul of the religious education curriculum and the employment of teachers who authentically know and live their Catholic faith.

My husband grew up going to Mass as a child, I was baptised as a baby but did my sacraments as an adult. It wasn't until my son was doing his first reconciliation and sat in on the classes (one of few parents who did) and my understanding grew, my love for the Church and the Lord grew because of a wonderful sacramental coordinator. I now help her teach! 5 years later, I am so grateful and believe it was His will.

I believe that the Church has helped shape me into a good person by instilling in me a faith and good works doctrine that is essential for salvation.

Small group gatherings, open discussion about our faith in an age and life stage appropriate manner have been an absolute blessing. Learning and extending on Christ's teachings has brought me closer to our faith, without such opportunities it would not have been possible.

It has been great.

I migrated from the UK in 2011 at the time when sexually education was being pushed in kindergarten. I came to Australia guided by the Holy Spirit who directed my family to deal with the PARED schools in [ - ] to ensure the right environment to be trained in the Catholic faith. The Spirit of Opus Dei has been very uplifting and supportive to us by means of protecting the precepts of the Church with a palpable good example with deeds and right formation. The fact that there are ample opportunities to grow in the faith make everyone more encouraged to become closer to God. This is demonstrated by the consistent availability of the chaplains at the school who are happily given people spiritual direction, adult lessons in the Catholic faith, Daily confessions, monthly spiritual recollections, encouraging piety activities and being clear and concise in their explanations of the Scripture and tradition in the Church. These schools also provide formation to parents at different stages of the children development and encourage an environment where families help together and get to know each other for the benefit of their children. Family camps, Father and son camps, mother and daughters activities, boys club, girls clubs where kids remain active and engage with activities that might mislead them from the faith. All these activities and opportunities create a more palpable interaction with faith in action. I have also come in contact with Catholic formation material through PARUSIA media such a CDs, DVDs, free talks, free short workshops, online Catholic webs such as FORMED where you can obtain movies, podcast and free listening of apologetics, books etc. To be used in my own time.

Mum went to school in the aftermath of Vatican II (Kumbaya central) and so didn't learn much at Catholic primary and high school. Dad is atheist. Aside from taking us to Mass, until my brothers were old enough to stay home alone, and the odd prayer, the faith was never really handed on to me. I had some lovely SRE teachers in the state schools (always just around the corner—would I have learnt much at a Catholic school considering most of the kids don't go to Mass?) but that was more simpler Bible stories and what not. In my 20s (to cut a long, long story short) I catechised myself. WOW! Church teachings (from God) are so inspiring and beautiful and true and helpful. I

wish I had them in high school, it would have been a great help in my life. There are things you do that you can't take back that I would not have done if I had them. Why were the teachings (read Pope John XIII's intro speech to Vatican II, mindful of dodgy translations) not handed on to my mum and me! I feel robbed! At 22, I heard the Tantum Ergo (and other such songs) for the first time ever. I love pop music but wow! Why had I never heard these beautiful God oriented Latin hymns and chants before? Why, in so many ways, was I robbed of my heritage? Why! For what possible reason or purpose? 92% of Catholic under 30 in Australia don't go to Mass, so whatever the reason, be it misguided or ideological or whatever, it clearly bombed, it failed miserably. What a major stuff up. Does anyone actually care? Btw, actions speak louder than words. Let the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Immaculate Heart of Mary and Pure Heart of Joseph shine bright in all things.

I went to Catholic school all my life but didn't really know anything about my faith until I completed adult faith formation and Catholic Adult Education Centre in Sydney. It is very disappointing that such a centre has been closed down because the single biggest problem I see in our Church is the issue of formation. I learnt more about scripture and the catechism and the moral stance of the Church in 3 years at the CAEC, then 13 years at a Catholic school. If I didn't do this, then I probably wouldn't remain Catholic after university. The second is we need to remain steadfast in our traditions. As a Maronite, it is vital to see the tradition and reverence in the Church which allows us to view the Church as a sacred body and not just another human institution. If the Church becomes just another humanist organisation which helps and educates people then we become like any NGO. We need to maintain our identity and traditions to ensure survival for future generations. It is good to do the work of the Lord but in order to do the work of the Lord, we need to know the Lord. We need to move beyond Vatican II.

Every year, our family has been blessed to attend the annual Family Spiritual Retreats at [ - ] Co-Cathedral, [ - ], since 2013. And each year, we grow spiritually, both individually and as a family. Countless families benefitted from these retreats and it's that time of year that our children look forward to the most. In these few days, there is a variety of activities that focus on spiritual development combined with family fun activities, mingling with other like-minded families and many opportunities for our family to grow stronger. We are very blessed to have a priest attend with us as it allows for daily confession, Mass and adoration. It has not just made our family unit grow stronger, but our domestic Church through bonding with clergy and other families.

I believe that because I stand by the Church's teaching even when unpopular, it moves people more. They know that I believe in God and his role as creator because I am willing to do things that seem counter cultural as a young person. It's interesting that these often seemingly hard things about our faith such as chastity actually make living an authentic faith easier and have been enriching to me. God doesn't ask us to do things that are difficult because they are difficult but because he knows what's best for us. This has been my experience and I have so much love for the Church that it really saddens me to see people afraid to stand up for it and hold the tradition for the Church.

I was a child of the 70s, raised to go to Church with my mother. We moved from our first parish to [ - ] parish because the priest was nicer: less stern, fire and brimstone. We had witnessed a family friend demoralised after daring to attend for confession when she had recently divorced. Shouting

could be heard from the confessional. As it happens our new priest at [ - ] parish was also very intelligent and a caring, compassionate man: Fr [ - ]. Mum was a regular Churchgoer but not overly involved in the life of the Church, I think because she like most lay Catholic lived their faith in spite of their criticisms of the Church culture which was also slow to embrace needed change. After Fr [ - ] retired I don't think mum ever much warmed to another priest as they seemed a little smug and lacking in warmth. But she's still attended Mass as her way of spending time with God and putting her concerns in his care. In my teenage years, I had good friends of a protestant persuasion who fostered in me a love of the Scriptures and I was a member of good thinking Catholic youth groups where we discussed matters of faith and morals freely. So these were my formative years that fostered a strong faith in God which perhaps like my mother's was able to criticise the Church and keep a bit of distance from it while continuing to be part of it. To me that was natural: God is the God beyond all our formulations, sacraments, scriptures, theological understandings, liturgies, rules and regulations. These things will always be imperfect as will priests and clerics. And any Church pronouncement needs to be tested in the light of one's own formed conscience. Today I am a Catechist prompted by hearing of the old-fashioned faith education my children were receiving. They would come home with formal prayers, rosary beads, guardian angel prayers and I feel that this was an older approach to faith that said 'say your prayers if you want to be good and go to heaven and this is what to say': usually in arcane language. Again to me that missed the point of the core themes of the Gospel: God's great love for us and our faith response to love God by loving others. I feel many Catholics today need to be encouraged to grow in their faith: it's not about rules and regulation and pious practice and they better not fall into the idolatry of faith in the institutional Church, even though we might well love it to the extent it nourishes our faith in God.

I remember the Nuns at the Catholic Primary school I attended. I remember their direction "Love God, God is everywhere, Love each other." This is the core of my life. Going to Catholic Bible Study, I have found comfort and love and solidarity in my faith with others, and also have been learning Gods word. The being with my community I have found as important as the learning. The love and care I have found in my community at hard times has been very comforting, e.g. parishioners offering to take my elderly Mother to Mass/ Holy Communion etc. Seeing a need and doing something about it. We have been going to Daily Mass where possible this last year ([ - ], [ - ], Sydney), also attending Eucharistic Adoration and First Saturdays. I have found all these very nourishing and comforting and we hope to further grow in love and knowledge of God and his Holy will. Getting to know the people in the parish has also banished the loneliness we may have otherwise felt moving to a new suburb. Finding a community that is one with God with us has also been wonderful.

I did the Alpha program last year, it reshaped my Catholic faith. Why won't the [ - ] Diocese support this wonderful faith development program aimed at today's world?

I'm part of a very orthodox and reverential parish. My parish priest is a holy man and celebrates the Mass slowly and meaningfully. There is also a Latin Mass once a month in the parish which many people come to. It's obvious people WANT a deep faith experience and that the watered down version of Catholicism is just not cutting in anymore.

What I can share is that my heart aches when I see that the Holy Mass and Holy Eucharist not receiving the love and veneration it deserves. I have not encountered any program informing the faithful on what the Mass actually is, what each part means, and how to attend it properly.

Growing up I went to an independent Catholic school. We had weekly Mass and could visit the blessed sacrament often as well as receive confession. Our chaplain was a playful, humble and wise priest. This has laid roots for my faith, which sustain me today. I would love to think that every Catholic school in Australia is like this. But as far as I can see, these schools are Catholic in name only.

When I attended a Catholic high school in the 60's, I was a leader in YCS (Young Christian Students) and this was based on learning and experiencing the Gospels and how we could relate the Gospels to our lives, "going out to others" and reporting back about our experiences, supporting each other. This shaped my views about my faith in action. The other movement that was instrumental in shaping my adult Christian life was the Family Group Movement, as established by the Passionist priests, and especially Fr [ - ]. He was an open and honest man sharing his weaknesses, but a true servant. We learnt and experienced "love in action" with others, reaching out and caring about others in a day-to-day context. The celebration of the Eucharist was simple and inclusive of all.

My faith has been shaped by many factors, including close friendships with very conservative Catholic, close friendships with atheists and those ostracised from the Church, and most recently but very deeply, friendships with very marginalised and poor people. I have celebrated Masses in a very small community of homeless and near homeless people and I have very rarely felt closer to Jesus. The beautiful natural landscape of Australia also feeds my soul.

There is much good that I can say of the Church in general. I rediscovered my faith thanks to it. However, my experience of the Church in Australia is that it is timid when it comes to defending the faith and approaching/evangelising outsiders ... especially when compared to our protestant brothers/sisters. I want a Church that does not fear making a stance for the truth.

Overall, I have had a very positive experience with the Church. Currently though I am in conflict as I have PCOS and cannot fall pregnant without assistance but this goes against Church teaching. If I don't go through with IVF, I will not be able to have children. This is quite upsetting and I feel needs to be revised.

Migrating from a Catholic country, I found doing apostolate quite challenging when I first arrived in Australia. It was more difficult to talk to people about God. Luckily, I found a community who shared the same faith and values as me and my family, and we felt the need to help people get to know God and become closer to Him by inviting them to means of formation.

Growing up I was basically a Sunday Catholic ... while both my parents were very religious, we were never involved in the Church. I guess that's because of where we came from, Malta. In Malta there always seemed to be plenty of religious (priests/Nuns/Brothers) around and they seemed to do everything. Having been back to visit, Malta is very different now, like many places, not as many joining religious orders, hence, more lay people joining and helping out. Anyway, I guess we only started getting more involved in the Church after we had our first child, people actually came

up to us, chatted us and made us feel more welcome (Penrith parish) not making a judgement just stating a fact. Then, our now parish, Corpus Christi started developing...even before we became a parish in our own right. From our humble beginnings in a state school hall, when a Redemptorist priest started coming out to do Mass every Sunday morning. Then, clearing land for our local Catholic Primary school, which became our place of worship and eventually Corpus Christi became a parish. Prior to us becoming a parish, we had some Franciscan priests come out and live amongst the community. They made everyone feel that we (the people) were part of a community, not just individuals. They taught us that "We are the Church" not the buildings and that we, the people are the parish, not the priests, as they come and go but we were there to stay! They had also asked a few of us to become Acolytes, something I never felt I was worthy to do! They convinced me that I was and now look forward to serving at Mass.

My faith started in 2010 with a spiritual experience. I experienced the Holy Spirit and that changed my life. Following this, I had a great Franciscan as a parish priest who humbled himself and was all-serving. He showed me what ministry meant. I don't see clergy as something special. I am approaching Perm. Diaconate ordination within a couple of years. I see myself as a male who goes through the normal shit that most people go through. I would like to see Masses be presided in something other than fancy dresses dating back to earlier times. Black pants and a sports/business shirt can show the sign of our baptism. Clergy can look normal. The paraclete is the guide, as Jesus told us: I will send you one when I am gone. This is what I experienced. The spirit should not be left to Evangelicals and Charismatics, expand of hearts with the spirit. Jesus was a great representative for God on Earth and is a great intercessor, but the Spirit is what moves us. I look to the suffering Christ on the cross, not because "he died for our sins" (a theological manifestation of the Church making everyone feel inadequate) but a Christ who wanted the Church to see the suffering in His eyes through those suffering in our society today and to respond to it! The source and summit should be the transformation of the individual into a Christ-human at the Eucharistic banquet, when the sacramental sign of Jesus' body and blood are consumed, it should not be seen as a golden ticket to heaven.

My faith foundations are Catholic, however my faith came alive when I experienced the Spirit moving in me through charismatic forms of praise and worship and devotional prayer in mixed-Christian denominational settings. I volunteered my time as a youth leader on Christian camps for children who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. The youth leaders at these camps and in these settings were of a variety of Christian denominations, and I was inspired by how they each had a personal relationship with Christ, something I felt that I didn't have at the time despite knowing about God my whole life! Since that time, I have been involved as a youth participant and then a youth leader for Junior and Senior youth groups in my parish in [ - ] Diocese for 15 years. I also attend charismatic praise and worship gatherings and retreats as I have found that these experiences have helped me experience God and the Spirit in new ways and be open to responding to God working in me in exciting ways! My favourite type of liturgy is Charismatic Mass as I find that in this setting, the faith community comes together to listen to what the Spirit is saying and shares what the Spirit is saying with each other, through charismatic experiences of praying in tongues, falling in the Spirit and creative worship. In order to experience the Spirit working in my life and respond to God in my life, I needed to be open to these experiences, which

took lots of challenging and encouragement from key people in my life! God was patient with me, and I took a leap of faith, and it was the best decision of my life!

I converted (reverted) to the Catholic faith after over a decade of being a committed Evangelical Protestant. One of the main reasons for my conversion was the clarity of Catholic teaching and the Church's faithfulness to its tradition. I am now horrified to see that I have re-joined the Church in a time of major crisis, of priests and bishops too afraid to affirm the basic teachings of the Church (particularly in regard to sexual ethics) for fear of judgement from the secular world. Worse still are the clergy who want to conform the Church's teaching to the current ethics of the secular world, on a variety of issues such as gay marriage, communion for the divorced and remarried, etc. etc...

My family and I are so blessed that we have received regular formations and the sacraments from the priests and people of Opus Dei. I was a practising Catholic but at the verge of marriage breakdown 10 years ago. A friend took me to a weekday Mass and I made my confession to an Opus Dei priest who did not rush me out but very patiently listened to my story and made me feel how important person I was in the presence of God. It was my first time I confessed to a priest who took his time listening and did not give a formulated advice. Since I look forward to making a confession each time to become a better daughter of God. With a regular formation I received, I realised that my marriage was a vocation God gifted to me and my husband so we have sought the ways of cherishing the vocation in Him. As our children grow to teens, I see the great benefits He allowed me to receive from regular formation and confession so my husband and I are strengthened together to bring our family close to God. God is generous he granted another blessing on our family growing in faith within a wonderful parish. At the parish, Eucharistic Adoration is available before each Mass and whole day adoration twice a week. There are so many other services available for all parishioners to grow in faith, including First Friday and Bible study and the whole parish is very active to support each other under the guidance of a good shepherd, our local parish priest who is totally available for us. Although it is not a small parish, he brings us together in unity to help each other with prayers and deeds. We want to share these blessings we have received, so many brothers and sisters are constantly growing in faith and united to evangelise our families, community and Australia.

Dear Plenary Council team, it is a pleasure to be able to share my testimony with you that is relevant to Australia and to the Council at this time. After receiving a blow to the head in 2015, the doctors discovered an aggressive stage 4 cancer in my head. And so started a journey of healing, miracles and above all experiencing God's mercy and omnipotence. After being healed from Fibromyalgia upon visiting the [ - ] chapel in [ - ], I was given many mystical experiences. As part of these experiences, I was given an urgent message for Australia and for the world. It is an urgent call for the Church at this time. Please find attached a short summary of my experience along with a link to a YouTube testimony and contact details. May God bless you all.

I am a 57-year-old woman, born in Australia from Maltese parents. My father was a Sunday Catholic, even though he was a Franciscan brother before he left the Friars. My mother embodied more of her Catholicism in her everyday life, and I would say I was brought up as Catholic, even though I attended public school. I was not encouraged to take an active part in our parish. Once I moved to [ - ] with my husband, and I started attending the Marion playgroup with my daughter, I

began to feel a connection to the other community members. The parish of [ - ] had not yet been formed, but the bare beginnings of our parish were already being laid. [ - ] a Redemptorist, began to empower us to be our Church and to take ownership with involvement. As our sense of community developed the Franciscan Friars, ([ - ], [ - ] and [ - ]), were formative in our Christian journey, ownership and involvement. I was involved in participation in 'Renewal of Faith', Lenten, and Advent small groups, and facilitated sacrament preparation and Communication groups. I saw a need and became a Eucharistic Minister, reader and commentator. Our children naturally progressed from playgroup to the Catholic school system, even though my husband and I had previously only considered public schooling, because of our own personal experience, prior to our involvement in our parish. We were fortunate to have [ - ] as a parish priest, who just built even further upon the good parish formation we had experienced. We also have had some priests who were not so good with formation.

I was able to attend a number of retreats in my teen years and as a young adult, which allowed me easy access to confession and time to pray. They also offered opportunities to learn more about my faith—in particular about the compatibility of faith and reason, which greatly impacted me.

I was going to leave the Church at the age of 14; despite all the programs and activities and planning that the Churches were doing—something internally was not being met or fulfilled though I could not understand what it was. However, one day I walked into a random Church at Lewisham in 2010 at the age of 15 and it was empty, but I felt this grace overshadow me and encountered the presence of God truly present. I couldn't comprehend what was happening and I was very overwhelmed. More importantly, I could not understand at that time why this Church was particularly different from other Churches and why I hardly experienced it growing up. I later realised that the Church was dedicated to the exposition of the Blessed sacrament (Eucharistic Adoration) to make readily available for the lay people. It was what made me stop and turn around. From 14 years old to now, I later became a youth minister, then a full time missionary for 15 months at the age of 20-21, and now currently a young adults minister present. With this firm hope and belief—that yes the Church may have programs, courses, teachings—but only the Eucharist can personally save the soul of people- especially young people. Make it an initiative with all the youth offices in the Church in Australia- expose them to at least an hour of adoration in all their initiatives. If the Eucharist can change my decision as a 14 year old girl. It can change others too. Trust in the Eucharist.

Parish priest placement has shaped much of my experience of the Catholic faith. I grew up in a Church which had lax priest after lax priest. As a consequence I did not know the Catholic faith. I knew what to do in Mass, how to pray, and I did at least somehow grasp the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. My mother grew up in a time when they taught what we believe- but not why. I went to Catholic primary and High school where my teachers did not practice or know their faith. I had many questions about the Church and I thought there were no answers—certainly there was no one I could ask. I am very glad that when I was 19, I met some amazing priests who gave talks about the faith and guided me to adoration and confession. As someone who grew up going to Mass every Sunday and going to Catholic schools- it angers me that it was only a chance encounter which lead me on the path to truly knowing my faith. I am angry that some priests get

away with simply saying Mass and wishy washy homilies which are not going encourage a life which will get anyone in to heaven. Quite simply the Church needs to TEACH THE FAITH. So that if we choose to turn from it- we at least know what we are choosing against

I am a young, Catholic doctor who attended a CEO primary school and a systemic Catholic High school. My faith was nurtured in my family. Lip service was paid to religion by teachers in the school. They didn't believe in it or live it. We missed out on a great treasure. My friends opted for a hedonistic materialism, children out of wedlock and generalised irresponsible use of their minds. We were not taught the great traditions developed and preserved by the Benedictine tradition such as those of Logic, Philosophy. All we got was some 'nice' theology from the 70s which barely captured our hearts and minds, because there was no challenge. If I as a doctor have to decline to participate in abortion and contraception in my working life, to talk to people about living their sexuality with integrity, lose patients by declining to send patients along for IVF and risk de-registration for refusing to prescribe medicines to people who want to have homosexual sex with randoms so as to reduce their risk of HIV, then I expect my priest to be talking about these things from the pulpit as well. Do not leave it to the laity to solve the Church's problems. We are doing our bit. We expect the Church to show leadership. Motherhood statements such as 'diversity' and 'inclusivity' are wearing thin and are removing people's ability to judge rightly.

Although I am a practising Catholic, in recent times I feel I am more inspired to listen to Hillsong or Joel Osteen as their preaching and music really uplifts me. I feel quite sad that I have now turned to other Christian Pastors to grow my faith.

1) If the Church in Australia can clarify its norms on the tradition of celibacy. What does Australia need? Where is it heading with this question? 2) Clarify (or consider changes to) the norms for the selection of representatives of the people of the Church in Australia. There was an issue regarding the canon law norms for setting up councils to moderate such events as local and plenary councils. However, those appointed mainly consisted of those considered ministers of the Church—such as clergy and religious. What is the process of selection and criteria for those who are otherwise, and do they have an active voice/vote to those things proposed in council? 3) To what degree does the Church in Australia engage in efforts for ecumenism? I don't hear much of this, if ever (only out of personal interest).

The good and holy priests and religious of our schools and parishes who have been wonderful models of humility and joyful presence have certainly shaped who we are today. Especially those who have firmly taught us exactly what the Church's teachings are without compromise and who have bravely challenged the current societal norms. They have led by example by living simple lives without the arrogance and affluence like some others who purport to have the good of their flock as their first priority.

Relations Commission—they haven't met over the past three years to my knowledge. These endeavours continue at a grass roots level but with little encouragement or leadership. I fully understand that our clergy have had other agendas to be concerned about so isn't it time more authority be handed over to lay members who have the time and passion to continue this essential work? It strikes me that there is a lack of energy in continuing the work of renewal that

started so earnestly with Vatican Council II. We have allowed ourselves to be too distracted by the events occurring both in our culture and with the rapid changes in social media etc.

I am born Catholic, I was an altar boy, now I rarely go to Church, but I try to live an honest and caring life. I know God will look after me for my good deeds. I want everyone to be treated equally with respect. That's what God would have wanted too.

As a Maronite Catholic, I think Our Lord is amazing! I have a zeal to show the world this amazing God.

This meeting was the regular meeting of 6 to 10 families meeting once every month for the last almost 17 years; The families came from various parishes in the diocese of [ - ] and Sydney; The families have migrated from Goa in India. As part of the monthly meeting, these families meet up and have a prayer, reflection, sharing/discussion and then closing prayer and fellowship with dinner. So the little children, youth and adults all sit in a circle for this prayer, reflection, sharing/discussion etc. There are times they go out for the picnic or overnight stay but always ensure that there is good time for prayer, reflection or discussion. In the Marian Months of May and October, we would pray and reflect on the Rosary and Mother Mary's role in the life of a Christian. All have been born Catholics and have met up once every month for the last 17 years – newer families have joined and gone every now and then. This sort of monthly prayer meeting has helped these families a lot to come together and help each other and grow in love and fellowship and friendships. Everyone makes it a point and makes effort to practice our faith and live the faith and grow in our faith.

As a 17 year old, I attended a local youth camp at which I experience 3 very important facets of faith and Church: 1. I experienced joyful faith, in which people were enthusiastic about and during prayer and faith was shared openly and excitedly. 2. I experienced authentic community, in which I was actively welcomed and made to feel at home. I was valued within the community, and this was felt. 3. I experienced an outward Church. The camp did not end once everyone was home. We were inspired to continue to live out our faith. We were encouraged to share our faith, our joy, and our experiences with others. The community continued to function as a community, supporting each other, walking alongside each other, and continuing to invite others in. I experienced 3 amazing and integral aspects of faith and the Catholic Church at this camp. I should experience these things every time I attend Mass, or at every Catholic event that I attend, however I do not, and neither do the majority of Catholic in Australia.

I always remember the people of faith who really lived their faith in the ordinariness of life rather than just in the Church building and its immediate surrounds. Yes, they were involved in the life of the parish community but they mainly they did not allow this involvement to give them some kind of higher standing or arrogant status or power. They always remained humble and welcoming.

There are a few areas I think need to be considered or addressed in order to remove roadblocks and better assist people in living out their faith.

1. Access to Adoration and the sacraments a) Mass times, i. Availability—Many parishes only offer daily Mass at 9am, which is not accessible for people who work during business hours. While I understand that our priests can't cater to everyone it would be great to see more early morning

or evening Masses, even if only on one day a week. If neighbouring parishes coordinated and each offered one evening Mass a week it would make a huge difference. I used to live in an area where between 7am daily Mass at one Church and evening Masses at 2 nearby Churches 1-2 evenings each it was much easier to build daily Mass into my weekly schedule.

ii. Advertising/transparency/ correct information—Many parishes do not advertise their Mass times or information on parish websites tends to be very outdated. This can be problematic at the best of times, but particularly when travelling, or when trying to find a Mass to attend on Holy Days of Obligation, especially in regional areas. From personal experience I have tried to check parish bulletins on many occasions only to find the most recent bulletin available to date to months or years earlier. Even with current bulletins, I have turned up at churches in country towns on Sunday mornings to find them locked and empty at the appointed time. On one occasion in my home metropolitan diocese of the time I was unable to attend my usual parish due to a wedding. I arrived at one church at 8:15 only to find that the advertised 8:30 Mass had been changed to 8am. I instead went to a nearby parish for their 9am Mass only to sit in the Church until 9:10 when a parishioner came in to announce that due to a parish anniversary the Mass had been moved to 10am. I had to return to the first Church who thankfully had a 9:30am Mass. If it's this difficult at times for a regular Mass attender to get to Mass, is it any wonder that many Catholic no longer understand the significance of celebrating Mass on a Sunday at the minimum?

iii. Other—with modern technology as a tool it would be great if a functional app or website could be produced to help find Churches and Mass times, etc. nearby. Some dioceses do have these but from experience they tend to be clunky to use and have outdated information.

2) Adoration/confession—many parishes only offer confession in 15-minute timeslots at times not accessible to many people (e.g. 4pm Saturday) and many never offer Adoration. If a life of grace through the sacraments is central to living one's faith then surely we should be making the sacraments as easily available as possible to all people, especially those who have been away from the Church and might find returning daunting to begin with. The best and most well-funded evangelisation programs will never compare with simply being able to sit with the Lord in the Eucharist and pray.

I am 29 and left an abusive religious community just under 4 years ago. I encountered them through my university chaplaincy at a particularly vulnerable time as my family faced a serious illness and several family tragedies. The female chaplain took advantage of this, insisting I see her daily, have "spiritual direction" weekly and also called me at home several times a week. This led to a co-dependent relationship where I was pressured into discerning with her community despite not having an attraction to it. I ended up living with a lay member of the community right near their own house, during which time I experienced continually escalating levels of psychological, emotional, spiritual and to some degree financial abuse. I was isolated from friends and family and had personal boundaries crossed with increasing severity to the point of this female religious one day going into my apartment without my knowledge or permission when I wasn't home. Any time I raised concerns I was accused of not doing God's will or of being disobedient to the Holy Spirit, On many occasions I was forced to sit for hours while facing all sorts of false accusations

and having my words twisted and vulnerabilities played upon. I allowed things to reach the point they did through youthful trust and optimism that, despite the many red flags, surely I could trust religious to do what was best for me, especially ones appointed by a bishop to a chaplaincy role. That trust was sorely abused. Four years on I am convinced that had I not left when I did I would have had a nervous breakdown at barely 25 years of age, and I have struggled with recurring anxiety at times since. I never formally entered the community, but the nature of my discernment felt akin to going through a messy divorce. I had to leave my home and my friends and change jobs on short notice, it was a very long time before I could start to trust priests or religious again, and it largely felt like no one would care or believe me if I shared my experience. The president from this community actually travelled to Australia from Rome a year after I left and after hearing 8hrs of my testimony apologised and assured me that the person responsible would be removed from her ministry role before the end of the year. She is still active in her diocese today. I have since learned of other former students who also experienced abuse from this community, and while I have no desire for revenge and have come a long way in being able to work towards forgiveness, I am aware that, while a small minority I hope, there are many within the Church suffering as a result of abuse of kinds other than sexual within the Church. I think it would be valuable for our bishops to be aware of stories like mine in order to help support those of us who are suffering in this way, and if possible to put safeguards or guidelines in place to help prevent others from finding themselves in similar situations or to provide a means to reach out to if needed.

In a diocese in which I recently lived (the Archdiocese of Sydney) priests are regularly being moved around, often on short-notice, and I believe this does a disservice to both the priests themselves and the laity.

The priest—from a mental health perspective surely this lack of stability can't be a good thing, particularly when priests are being moved every 1-2 years. As a layperson who has moved frequently I understand it to be stressful at the best of times even with remaining in the same job and parish, so for a priest to be entirely uprooted regularly can't possibly be good. I am also saddened when visiting the graves of priests in cemeteries to think that many priests may not end up with many people to visit them in nursing homes or pray for them when deceased as priests of former times could, having long-term relationships with parishes and the people in them.

Relocating regularly also hinders the ability to administer a parish appropriately as a priest who is a good steward is constantly having to get used to the culture of a parish before being able to take ownership, and is then unable to start or maintain any long-term initiatives as things often fall apart without a good father and leader to drive them.

The Laity—It can be anything from disconcerting to traumatic to have priests changed suddenly. At the very least except in extreme cases people should at least be given time to adjust to the knowledge that a priest will be moved. I have been in two parishes where the priest was moved very suddenly, once while on leave, and it had a devastating impact on the community. People have lost trust in the leadership at a higher level in the diocese because of these occurrences. Particularly where a priest has supported an individual or family through a significant life event such as a death or illness it can cause great anxiety to know that they will no longer be available in

the same capacity and that a new priest will need to be gotten up to speed at the very least. I know of people who had arrangements with priests to take communion to the homebound or people in nursing homes who have this arrangement cancelled when a new priest arrived and was unable to do so due to other commitments. On a different note, people who've left the Church or been away for a while tend to often still have memories of an attachments to a particular priest they knew. If and when they do visit or return to the Church they are less likely to make another visit or re-join the community if they constantly find only a stranger to whom they feel no sense of connection. The priest shouldn't be their reason for returning or not, but especially when formation is lacking it can certainly be a good open door to someone that grace can then work through.

I had my second conversion through an encounter with a friend and then some young adults. I've always been a person that goes to Sunday Mass with my family and Easter/Christmas because I always thought that was what we had to do in this life as I was brought up in the Catholic faith. However, I drifted away and only really came back in the last decade. Meeting a community and a group of religious sisters that I now am very connected to shaped my faith to what it is today and most of how I've been formed, and am still forming, is through them. But I also truly believe that God put these encounters in my life because if I didn't follow His hand, I would have gone down a completely different path, probably would have still been Catholic but a lukewarm one at best and possibly in danger of losing my faith.

SG: FAITH EXP "As a child – on the first holy Communion, said a prayer to the Lord "I want to see you face to face". I always wanted to mean all the songs and prayers as a young kid; I had a deeper encounter with the Lord through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in India; At that time, I was already a trained Catechist, in the parish teaching catechism on Sundays to young children; My knowledge was purely on sacraments; At times, I went cold and came back; Our wedding was a big highlight; Then lukewarmness after we started life in Australia; Required a lot of effort to grow back; Opus Dei calling made sense to get discipline and growth in my life; All of the members of Opus Dei pray for each other every day; Every year formation and retreats and weekly meeting and spiritual direction; Then got invited to be a member of RCIA team:— this was a big growth experience

MP: FAITH EXP Earliest memories of going for Mass – but never really prayed; Fast forward 45 years—turn around came when the daughter went to the Baptist Church—that made me know and deeply understand my own faith; And started going for every effort—RCIA program, etc. ... learning and growing;

DEACON [R]: FAITH EXP—GREAT STORIES OF FAITH JOURNEY—Born Catholic and actively practiced the Catholic faith.—Experience of the Lord in all things—smile of grandchildren; nature; meeting from people ...—HOW HE WAS CALLED TO BE A LAY DEACON.

JC: FAITH EXP—Born Catholic and practiced the Catholic faith from younger days.—Very active in the Catholic youth groups. Story: put in an effort and make time to be with the Lord – in all forms God's word/scripture; helping as a SRE teacher.

VG: FAITH EXP—Born Catholic and always went to Church;—Spent some years helping in the Don Bosco institution in rural areas;—Question I would ask "Easter comes we say Jesus is alive – if

Jesus is alive, why doesn't he do the miracles he did when he was her alive on the earth?"—Then through the Catholic Charismatic renewal had a deep personal encounter with the Lord—Ever since, have seen miracles in daily lives—Marriage was the great experience – also of live of ups and downs but the Lord continued to help and show the way.—As an RCIA team member, it has been a big learning experience and sharing experience as well.

RE: FAITH EXP "I had done a total surrender experience and prayer to Mother Mary to 'teach me to love your son' has helped her to grow and be guided from then on; God is giving graces and he is all free to do what he wants to do in me – I'm so in love with him that God is part of her life and everything revolves around him – Lord I love; I can see his hand in everything that happens to and around me. I will not exchange HIM for anything; Mother Mary done every make me lose that love for me.

Our faith formation is rooted in our birth country Sri Lanka. If it were not that we may have lost our faith when we migrated here because here it's more materialism that matters and the Church is not readily available to us. Sometimes the Church is distant we feel. We pray the rosary say our novenas go to Mass where Mass is available and make our devotions and read spiritual books. We volunteer to charitable causes to help and we do our best as mothers and wives at home. We would like to be sustained by the Eucharist. More often, we go to three different parishes to get all these sustenance in faith.

I go to a traditional Latin Mass and so far I think it's better than the Novus Ordo Mass.

We are a young adults group ranging from the ages of 16—35. We hope that the Church can be a form of inspiration, enlightenment and of love, moving forward into the future!

Being a catechist has been very helpful, as it was a challenge to me to pray, to think, to find the right words, to seek theological education. The experience with others involved in the Mission has been inspiring and I have been shown new ways of doing things.

I like the stories of World Youth Day in Australia and how this event changed many young people in Australia. Also the world-wide youth programs that young Australians attend. We pray that Australia would shape its future family and marriage life too with hosting such international programs for marriage and families. Australians like Saint Mary MacKillop and Aileen O'Conner are definitely good role models and their stories have shaped us people in Australia. God Bless you—the Plenary Council 2020 team.

As a migrant, I found out that it is taboo to discuss about Faith but I realised that starting talking about Faith to new acquaintances like Muslims, Buddhist etc. There are several experiences of faith boldly but graciously encountered like expressing my faith to a GP that my God will heal me as I refused to take anti-depressant pills she's prescribed. I told her I will prove to her "MY FAITH IN GOD WILL HEAL ME ..." She was sceptical and told me prove it and she would like to see the result in a fortnight. When I came to see her after the prescribed period, she was very surprised to see me well ... she said surprisingly "WHAT DID YOU DO YOU LOOK SO WELL?" Humbly I told her 'I told you doctor, my God will heal me and HE DID'.

I have been formed by a number of renewal movements in the latter parts of the 20th century. These movements were fuelled by the energy of that lowly sector we disparagingly call the laity.

There are so many stories and encounters in this amazing country. I migrated from the USA in 1987 and since living here have grown deeply in appreciation of the land and the Indigenous people's gift to us. Through dialogues, conferences, personal encounters, readings I have been nurtured by Aboriginal people's deep spirituality, their capacity for silence and listening and presence has deepened my spiritual practice immensely. The Religious women's communities and their vast service to Australians and many other parts of the world are inspiring. So many of them are thinking creatively about how they grow and nurture their charism into the future as they face the reality of diminishing numbers. Particularly I think of the Sisters of St Joseph and their creative expression of service in remote areas, through Josephite Community Aid and other forms of service. The Sisters of Mercy and their various outreach programs, the Sisters of Charity and their mission lived through their hospitals and clinics and service to the poor and vulnerable throughout Australia. There are many many more ... I have worked in the Uniting Church and had the privilege of participating in Eucharist led by women. It is a powerful thing to see a woman say, "This is the body of Christ." I had long been an advocate of women's ordination but this experience changed me and changed my appreciation of Eucharist as a woman. Here was a person LIKE ME, breaking the bread. It's hard to explain, but it's convinced me that the ordination is not just an intellectual argument, but goes to the heart of inclusion. I have been able to participate in many gatherings/ movements, which have deeply enriched my faith, changed my perspective on issues and nurtured wonderful friendships. These 'lay' movements are critical to the life of the Church and I hope they will have a voice at the Plenary Council. Some of these are: Catholic for Coalition of Justice and Peace, St Vincent de Paul Society, Women and the Australian Church (WATAC), Catalyst for Renewal, PALMS, Australian Reforming Catholic, Australian Community for Christian Meditation. Living in Sydney I participate in a very multicultural Church. The diversity of cultures brings a richness and also brings difference, so finding ways to continue to appreciate and love my fellow parishioners who may see the Church quite differently is hard at times, but also a place of growth for me. We don't want to be a Church of people just like us if we are truly to be Church. My own faith has been nurtured in many ways: By individuals who taught, advised, and listened to me over my lifetime. It has also grown through study, workshops, and conferences. Meeting people from diverse backgrounds, engaging in service as a volunteer and hearing how others express and deepen their faith has been important. Spiritual practices and retreats have given me a range of means to deepen my relationship with God, be faithful to the gospel and deepen my vocation.

I have been a parishioner at [ - ] Catholic Church [ - ] for 40 years. About 35 years ago, the parish priest Fr [ - ] invited me to be an Acolyte. I have since become more involved with the Church and enjoy my Sunday Mass connecting with God and fellow parishioners.

I was educated in 3 schools run by the IBVM, the Loreto nuns, I received a generally excellent education and those were the days before any substantial state aid. It was not until I went to university that I met other Catholic who had attended less privileged schools that I realised just how awful education could be when underfunded. I have seen all my adult life how the princes of the Church in Australia wield political power and influence to demand governments give more and more public money to finance private Catholic schools, and also demand that the Church will determine how that money is to be spent, not the governments. I have seen my own former

school headlined as the most overfunded in this country "Loreto Kirribilli, an elite Catholic girls' school charging almost \$19,000 a year in fees for senior students, received 283 per cent of its funding entitlement, making it the most "over-funded" school in the country." How can the school governors and the Church possibly justify this Massive grab of public money? How is this demonstrating the commitment of the Church to charity, justice and integrity when state schools and even many of the poorer Catholic schools are battling lack of resourcing? "Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love."

In my parish, confession is by appointment only. As the parish office is only open a few hours a week during working hours, when I am generally unable to access the phone there is no real way to even make an appointment to go to confession. When I arrived at a weekday Mass early to ask the priest if I could go to confession either before or after Mass I was ridiculed by the other parishioners and told that he was too busy and I wasn't allowed to even ask him. Confession is hard enough. Please schedule confession times so no one else has my horrible experience.

I am born Catholic who came back to the Catholic faith through the experience of observing my wife a non-Catholic convert to Catholic. It was mainly through her accepting the belief that the Eucharist is actually God, Jesus himself. If you can believe that the natural progression is to be the best Catholic you can possibly be.

I came back to the faith in my 20s. I had been raised in a non-practicing Catholic family and knew very little about Sacred scripture, Catholic doctrine or interior life. When I started approaching parish priests and Catholic laypeople for help in returning to the practice of the faith, I would often find that they would promote a watered down or even heretical "version" of the faith which left me feeling alone and empty. I joined parish youth groups, and the same problem persisted—poorly formed laypeople trying to form others, or priests who had unfortunately adopted a humanised and politicised (left leaning) view of the faith. Assistance and formation for families was, and is, almost non-existent. I was fortunate to discover some wonderfully holy priests and laypeople who formed me and helped me fall in love with the Christian faith.

I love my faith and time as an active member of [ - ] [ - ].

My experience of faith is a recount of my life. Reflecting on my life, I have realised how God has entered into each and every facet and has done something to make myself a better person and to become the saint that he wants me to be. I grew up in a large family of eleven (including myself) and my parents would have us pray the rosary every night and take us to daily Mass during school holidays as I grew up. I also went to an all girls' Catholic Opus Dei school called [ - ] school for Girls, in which they gave us the option to go to daily Mass and they also did First Friday devotions which I had a personal devotion to as my parish also does the same. Having graduated last year, I am thankful for my religion classes, as they were not confined to what other Catholic schools were taught. Rather, they exceeded what was given and our teachers did their best to provide authentic teachings on the Catholic Church as well as where the Church stands in the world. E.g.: I remember having multiple discussions on topics of chastity, abortion and euthanasia where my fellow peers were not afraid to ask controversial questions to clarify their understanding and thus steer themselves in the right direction in life through these discussions. I have also been active in my parish youth group at [ - ], [ - ]. They would hold annual camps/retreats and mix youth group

nights for a deeper fellowship among the people you were with through the spiritual nights that provided a greater understanding of the faith outside of school. My biggest experience of faith was by attending an Immaculata Mission school in Hobart, Tasmania; where I encountered God in such a personal way through adoration, deep fellowship and the witness of religious whom inspired me to also follow that path of life. Now, I am discerning to become a religious and am becoming a postulant in 3 weeks to see if this is what Our Lord is calling me to do.

I was born in Australia to parents from a Croatian background. It was instilled in us what my parents and their family had to go through to even be Catholic growing up. They were persecuted and denied opportunity. So, in that setting, being Catholic is very much part of my blood identity. Many of my relatives died to protect their religion and culture. Therefore, being Catholic is very important to me and part of my identity. A difference is that in my Catholic schooling, I was educated in the meaning being the Bible stories and through my other education I was educated in the sciences. So, whereas my parents cannot rectify evolution or the Big Bang in their minds, I can. I have learned it is okay to question Churches teachings and investigate the situation, time, place in which those teachings were developed. And that's not a bad thing as through my questioning, my faith remains strong. I have also seen things within the Church that do not make sense to me in terms of Gods teaching and I openly question that and ask for change. This means I am a good Catholic, not a bad one.

In a nutshell, born and bred Catholic, would frequent the sacraments but only after a general confession in my twenties did all those habits of prayer came alive.

The most active and vibrant Churches are the ones where the priest truly shepherds his people. The priest proclaims the truth no matter what, and the people have a vision of where they are going.

As it turns out, I had been considering the input to such questions that are raised in this submission for a number of years. I feel that God has granted me guidance in forming these answers and it is my duty to try to bring them to life. I trust that I have succeeded in making at least a small change to the Church in Australia in bringing the Church back towards Jesus.

I have been blessed to have family and friends whose faith is warm-hearted and oriented to doing justice. I have been disappointed to live through the way in which the possibilities for growth which Vatican Council II offered were not taken up. I am disappointed in the way that Francis is resisted by those who have something to lose. I hope that we will all have courage for the future.

This submission is a report of many dialogue sessions involving from 2-25 people at a time, all held in [ - ] NSW. Our participants included immigrants and children of immigrants, "cradle Catholic" and converts, Clergy, Religious and lay people. Our stories vary from one to another, but we share in the hope that making our voices heard through this submission will make them matter to the Plenary Council. We pray that the Holy Spirit will work in the council and the people of God in Australia to make the changes we need for the Catholic Church to become always and everywhere "a safe and loving place for hurting people to come to experience God's love and healing in their lives". For more detail about our parish's strengths, challenges, hopes and dreams, see the second attachment "Local Response from Plenary dialogues in [ - ] December 2018".

Fourteen years ago when we moved parishes, my wife and I volunteered for a couple of Church ministries. We encouraged our children to also be involved. Our active participation in the life of the Church brought us many good things. Principally – real friendships developed with our parish priest and the other families that also gave of their time and energies to the parish. These remain true friends to this day. And we are all still actively volunteering in various Church ministries today. This close association with the parish allowed us to receive ongoing formation in various forms—from parish retreats, camps, Lenten reflections, Bible study group sessions, etc. This closeness with the Church also developed in me, my wife and children a certain love for the Eucharist. So much so that today we try to go to daily Mass whenever possible. Although born a cradle Catholic who started out just ticking boxes, I can say we are now much more than just Catholic in name. This has come about because we have a Church leader, our priest, who we can see truly loves Jesus Christ and his Church. I think that more than his words, his dedication to truth and his actions have shown us and taught us to love Jesus and his Church. And to be able to share this love with other like-minded families within the parish brings a certain peace and happiness. I would love to see an Australia where priests teach their parishioners the gospel truth, unafraid, unaffected by populism—just simply dedicated to the truth. I would love to see an Australia where all parishes are vibrant, and where the love of Jesus can be seen and witnessed among its parishioners. I would love to see an Australia where its people are living the same faith that Jesus gave our apostolic forefathers.

It is so inspirational to see our faith so vibrant and alive in parishes like St Marys Our Lady Of The Rosary that consists of young families. These families really live their faith well and it's only by example that others will follow.

I am grateful for the Australian Catholic Youth Festival that was introduced in 2013 in Melbourne to gather young people to celebrate our faith. I have attended the Adelaide 2015 and Sydney 2017 festivals as well and was inspired to start up as part of the Year of Youth a young adults group at my parish, which has grown in the last year.

I was not an everyday Churchgoer till about 2 years ago. I now appreciate the everyday Mass that the parishes offer in almost any place that I go to.

I am wondering what I would say to my convict great, great, great grandfather [ - ] of [ - ] (first Catholic family), his son [ - ] (first Catholic family) and the family in whose homes Bishop Polding dined, slept, socialised and celebrated the much sought after and loved Mass? I suspect I would say "I am still at the table of the Lord and I hope the much needed changes can be undertaken!" Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and hopes.

Parents responded to how they sustain their faith currently: Prayer Reading the Bible and religious books, attending Mass on Sunday's and during the week. Probably something that I need to work on. My relationship with Jesus. Personal prayer, reading, reflection, discussion with family and friends Prayer and self-involvement, Reading Bible, attending Mass, Read the Bible stories—discussion with family—relate back to society—sharing values of being kind and Christian. We attend regular Bible studies. We pray daily and visit churches out of hours and read daily Masses. Trying to be a good person and model good behaviours to my children. Attending Mass and praying with my family before dinner and encouraging prayer. Also, by attending school Masses

with my children, I find extremely beautiful and special. I love hearing the children singing. Going to Mass. Reading the Bible. Attending adoration. I find through praying and being involved and active in my kids' life at the Catholic school and seeing them thrive keeps me engaged.

I was born a Catholic, after leaving school I worked on my father's sheep farm for 6 years. I then spent over 7 years studying for the priesthood with the Passionist Congregation but left a year and a half years before ordination. I later passed my Honours degree in Psychology, then later my Master's Degree. I then continued in my working life to counsel children, adolescents, families and adults for a wide range of difficulties. I firmly believe that Christ has watched over me and Our Lady has worked her special miracle in me.

I migrated to Australia as a child. Without an Orthodox Church, we went to the local Catholic Church. My parents raised us to have a strong moral character with a dependence on God. However, as I grew older I know I got slack in my faith—even though I went to Church it was more out of duty rather than for love of God. It wasn't until I was married and had two children that I had a conversion experience. For me it was through a book on Our Lady. When I look back there really was nothing special about this book but it was a moment of grace that made me realise that I needed to go back to reconciliation and to come closer to our Lord. I began to be very involved in the Marian movement but realising that I needed something else. I had such a hunger for the Faith and a zeal for souls, and really there wasn't much around at that point in time. My faith came to me prior to our family facing many difficulties. God knew we needed to be sustained and strengthened in our cross. Through a friend, I came in touch with Opus Dei. I felt that I had found a home, where I had direction, formation, answers to my numerous questions. I met with a very holy priest who helped me to work on my soul and to bring me closer to our Lord. He wasn't afraid to tell me how it is. Yes I was trying but I needed to hear what was right or wrong, and guidance to grow and weed out the dark areas in my soul, for love, for Jesus. In my marriage, I was blessed that my husband came close to the faith at a similar time so we were able to journey together but on our own individual path. We realised the importance of educating our children, firstly at home—to grow in the human virtues as a foundation for the supernatural virtues. As my husband and I were tertiary educated, we wished for academic excellence, more importantly we wanted a school that was going to help us form their character. We sent our children to a school that was entrusted to Opus Dei. There were many opportunities for family enrichment and spiritual growth, to help in our role as a parent and as a person of faith; to help rear our children, to be better parents, better spouses and loving children of God. After a number of years, I found my vocation, my path to God, through Opus Dei. I cannot believe the gift that I feel I have been given—which is to love God more and to serve him through this path of holiness. I loved the fact that I could bring myself, my family and so many souls to God in the middle of my crazy life with 8 children! This was my vocation, my path to help me to be faithful to the Church and to grow in holiness taking as many souls as I can to God.

Adoration at [ - ] [ - ]. Mass at [ - ] [ - ]. Mass at [ - ]. WYD—all my 4 children have been involved in various WYD. Energy and enthusiasm of our newly ordained priests. Having our older experienced priests mentoring young priests and seminarians. In this time of Royal Commissions and the media and so-called prominent Catholic leaving the Church, our Churches are full. Good shepherd Plumpton, St Luke's Marsden Park is growing which is great but it doesn't have a priest.

My son struggled for 20 years with his first marriage and he sadly left home as he could no longer live under the same roof. After a few years, he was blessed with a loving and fully practicing Catholic partner. As the annulment process was too long, painful and very stressful, they had a civil marriage. We would have loved to see these two people remarry in the Catholic Church. Our Church failed to provide an easy process to annul their previous marriage so in the eyes of the Church doctrine they are living in sin. This makes us so sad as they are a truly practicing Catholic couple.

My journey has been very traumatic. Enough said!

Although I loved the Latin Mass and followed it closely, I felt and loved that the people and my children became more involved when English became the language used in the Mass. I loved Daily Mass when I could drive and was able. I felt far more involved and excited about my day when I started with Mass. I loved to be able to assist helping those who wanted to but were unable to attend Mass e.g.: taking communion to those who could not attend. Despite occasionally having Mass in the home the Church never actively encouraged this. These celebrations were only ever special occasions.

I love that in [ - ] area, there are Churches that have Masses in the morning and in the evening. There are overnight vigils and Eucharistic devotions. It helped me strengthen my faith having to go to Mass every day. I also love that there are choir members of different age groups. It would be great if in Catholic schools, there are Church and school collaboration. What they learn in the classroom especially in the religion class can be applied in practice in Church. Children, youth their parents would go and greet our Lord in the tabernacle. Praying, kneeling, teaching proper respect to the Eucharist. Proper genuflection. Fostering the devotion to the Holy Eucharist—God is truly present in the tabernacle. It is possible to have people of all ages approach Our Lord in the tabernacle even by giving him a short greeting.

It can be very demoralizing to enthusiastic young Catholics to be met by some older Catholics, some of whom seem to run the parishes, with patronizing disagreement on basic theology and Church Dogma.

I am a baptised Catholic with a parish Catholic school education. Like so many others, that's where my faith began briefly and ended. I lived my young life happily, relieved that I now had the freedom to do as I pleased. However, in quiet moments, a hollowness would invade my thoughts. With marriage and children following there were fewer quiet moments. Then the next phase of school began. A friend invited me a mothers' group with weekly talks on anything and everything related to children. I felt supported and more confident that I was not alone in this most demanding and rewarding of jobs. The warmth and cheerfulness of these women inspired me. I continued to attend further talks this time on the teachings of the Catholic Church, sacraments, the Mass. I was ready to hear more and realised that I knew so little about the faith I was baptised into. Besides I wanted what those women had—a supernatural optimism, in spite of or because of the real challenges of everyday life. Surrounded by positive people who were trying to live holy lives made faith an attractive proposition. I in turn have tried to encourage others in the same way.

When Pope John Paul died, my daughter was 6 years old. Always precocious and strong-willed, she asked me "How can I become a Pope, Mum"? "Darling", I replied, "that's one thing you can never be because you're a girl. Only men can become a Pope." "But Mum, You always told me girls can be anything we want to be." She was crying big, silent tears. I hugged her tight. My heart broke as held my sobbing self-driven, ambitious girl and I realised what my 6 year-old had just discovered—that the Catholic Church did not treat women as equals.

I am happy that there are churches around our area that have Masses in the early morning, mid-morning and evening. I can go to Mass often and deepen my relationship with God through prayer and the Mass. The different schedule allows me to go to Mass either very early before I go to work or at night after working. I receive formation through the school about character formation and this developed my faith and my prayer life even more. I practice my faith even more through talks I receive in school. The Church is our mother and it takes care of us. Formation is important in all levels and stages in our life. Being involved in the activities at Church and community will help families grow in their faith—love for God. Strong faith, strong families, strong nation, Strong Australia!

I love going with my friends to attend the novena of [ - ] at [ - ]. I go to confession there, which is available all the time. I also love to attend the Eucharistic adoration at a Church nearby. It helps me have a boost in my faith. Having Our Lady at our place so as to pray the rosary as a family. Processions, passion plays etc. to help us visually meditate and experience our Lord helping us better understand our faith.

I think the experiences of faith and Church that have shaped me the most are firstly growing up in a big and strong Catholic family. I grew up in Belgium and our family life was centred around prayer, service and hospitality. This is where I learned to pray, to help, to forgive and where lots of virtues were modelled to me. When I was 15 I had a very deep experience and encounter with God's love and was very active as a leader in Catholic Youth work for many years after that. Secondly, I took a sabbatical year when I was 20 to learn more about my Catholic faith and to serve the Church. I studied for 9 months at the Emmanuel school of Mission in Rome to grow in understanding and love for my faith and my Church. I came to Australia four years ago and the Church in Australia has grown very dear to me. The Church here is facing many challenges but I am very hopeful and persistent in prayer.

This relates to my answer to the first question. Growing up I attended a parish, which was more modern in its liturgy. I was part of a great youth group that really helped me in my faith, and then to share my faith with others. Then I went to university and the Catholic Chaplain exposed me to the more Traditional Liturgies of the Faith i.e. Latin Mass and adoration. I fell in love with my Faith all over again. I read a lot of books going deeper into the Faith and listened to a lot of talks. It was no longer something I did on a Sunday, or a thing that I do youth work for. It was my lifestyle, and defined every part of who I am. I craved going to adoration and attending the Latin Mass. It was just very beautiful. I truly believe that everyone is craving this. We all start off very shallow in our faith and join a youth group. But that is all surface. And then you really get to know your faith through the old traditions, then you fall harder in love. I know it may not be for everyone, but

these traditions really do connect us with the whole community of Faith from the very first Christians who were with Christ, to now.

I am about to turn 72. I became a Catholic as a young father in my early thirties. I remain a committed and active Catholic although one who despairs at the Church's inability to maintain relevance in Australia today. My personal sorrow is that my daughter and granddaughters view the Church as a closed boy's club. For many modern Australian women and for many of the men who love them, this is pretty clunky. The Church's current structures and procedures may have made a lot of sense 500 years ago. In Australia today they seem weird. The teachings and example of Jesus remain unchanged. The organisation that acts in His name needs to adapt if it is to have any chance of speaking to Australians in the 21st century.

From M: I was one of those Catholics who was a Catholic because I grew up Catholic. It was WYD2008 in Sydney that changed all of that. What began as an opportunity to meet new people and branch out turned into me really reflecting on my faith and going deeper—it led to my own conversion into Catholicism, one in which I chose to be Catholic because I wanted to be one, not because I was born into it. Through going to my youth group and receiving formation I was able to grow in my understanding and love of my religion and everything that comes with it. It is hard to see other people who claim to be Catholic but who pick and choose what they want to abide by, or to hear people persecute the Church but not have any understanding or knowledge about why. As a primary school teacher who has taught in the [ - ] diocese, I have seen firsthand how religion has been taught and I have heard other teachers who don't agree with some of the teachings of the Church but this is because they don't have any idea about what it really means to be a Catholic and why teachings are the way they are. This makes it hard for the students to learn and grow in their faith because they can only learn from what they are taught, and if the teachers don't know or understand, how can they pass this on to the kids. See attachment for other person's experience.

Vatican II taught me that both the text measures the person and the person measures the text.

Lifted Live events—communities supporting each other, Youth groups—the energy motivates and inspires, ACYF events, World Youth Day, Praise and Worship songs, Good relationships with clergy, priests, bishops, nuns, Hearing other testimonies and experiences, Adoration and sacraments

Strong, loving leadership selflessly centred on Christ has been the thing that has always put itself at my service and has been the instrument of my own growth as a person, leaders who have gently but confidently shown me when I have been going in the wrong direction and have shown me the way back to Christ. Social, progressive leaders, however those who decry the use of strong leadership have always proven themselves dictators and so close-minded that they won't even talk over differences of perspective, they won't clarify where some of their ideas come from and their actions reveal more love for themselves than for God. While they draw attention to social causes and grandiose initiatives of establishing a nirvana of imagined human harmony here on earth, individually they are so often so uncharitable to the person standing right in front of them! This makes perfect sense because 'you shall know them by their fruits' and so often these characters whom I have encountered have been inattentive to the Christ who is presented in the Gospels—hot air and no substance when it comes to actually obeying Christ, taking up THEIR cross

(being charitable to their immediate sister and brother) so as to follow HIM. This has been my experience of these 2 divisions within the Church about 90% of the time! And when I look to see where God is giving life to the Church—where He is providing vocations to service His people and where the majority of members in the community are personally motivated to engage and are getting active in their faith—it is always where there is this strong, loving leadership selflessly centred on Christ. There is a notable lack of these things with mere social, progressive leaders.

A positive experience has been reading and discussing “How to Defend the Faith Without Raising Your Voice” as a class and learning how to reframe fundamental doctrines of the Church by recognising the positive intention (usually based on a Christian ethos) behind people’s genuine concerns about human life and death, sexuality, women in the Church, politics. These lessons have equipped us to accompany every individual on their unique journey to God and ultimate peace, love and happiness. “Through formation classes and other people my perspective of faith has transformed greatly. I am now more comfortable with my faith when I am surrounded or see someone of faith who is confident and passionate in their beliefs. Before, I would feel embarrassed or different because I have never experienced a community of people (outside my family) with fervent faith. Now exposed to this, I feel inspired to be a better Christian and be more apostolic.” We have a Pro-life Club at school that gets together at lunchtimes to learn about a pro-life issue and put our good will into action. This term we organised a Project at a local Nursing Home to get to know the residents, write down stories from their past and create posters of their favourite things to decorate their rooms. Regular community service has helped me discover God in the faces of others and bring him to people who don’t know him.

Educate and encourage traditional Catholic practices such as novenas, rosary crusades, Eucharistic hour

Shocked by stories that were originally experiences by my parents, of betrayal of trust when they allowed their sons to be mentored by priests who went on to physically abuse the children like beating, smacking, belting; and verbal abuse like belittling, scare tactics, bullying. The families in question had only come to the realisation many years later when their children took their lives. Their loss was tremendous, the loss of their beloved children but also their trust and their faith which had always been central to their lives and many levels they were shattered. It is important to keep the essence of our Christianity and faith in light of everything that happened.

- 1) Being a parent of a trans-gender, it was a transforming experience, my faith have increased.
- 2) Experienced being rejected by priest as he is too busy to attend to a parishioner whose parent passed away.
- 3) Rejection of gay and lesbian. Discouraging families of LGBTQI. I don't want the youth of today to experience the rejection my daughter (now son) experienced.

- 1) Fear and condemnation experienced in Ireland in the Church, back in the days priests said women will go to hell if they don't have kids.
- 2) Glad to see the Church taking a Massive stand against offenders.
- 3) Continue and encourage movements like PROJECT RACHEL—Hope after abortion/support for women post abortion

The Australian Church would do well to learn from the charismatic and other religious communities in the way that they structure community and a lifestyle of faith. Not everyone has had a chance to be exposed to the good things of each of these communities at a parish level.

Some of us being new migrants in this country found some priests not welcoming. Unlike other denominations, they will give their full support to you from the Pastor to the members. Priests are so parochial and do not connect to the people. This is why every time there is a scandal in the Church, those people who suffered this kind treatment from the priests have lost interest to support the Church and defend their faith. They must learn to and understand the migrants to help them assimilate in the community. More depressing is we are hearing the same experience we had from the other priests coming from overseas trying to assimilate with the local priests. More so, the priests must be receptive of the charismatic movements as they are the one giving life to the Church today.

As much as theological education I have gained throughout the years of attending talks, retreats and lectures (in University), there is nothing that can beat a direct encounter of God through the sacrament of the Eucharist of whom he is really, truly and substantially present.

I have less of a story and more of a reflection to share. I was lost. A sheep with a shepherd, a boat on the rough sea with no land in sight. The Church was my refuge when I didn't even know what the Church is. It was in the Church that I found safe harbour and have grown as a person and in faith. We cannot be satisfied with the way things are. There is a need in our world, in Australia, for bold evangelisation.

Educated in a systemic Catholic school, it is only recently that I became aware of truly how little knowledge of the faith I really received. Through the internet, I have been able to connect with many authentic Catholic and teachers of the faith across the world. I have discovered a wealth of knowledge and understanding and my eyes have truly been opened to the wonder and truth of God, his creation and the promise of eternal life. I was cheated of this when my parents sent me to a Catholic school expecting that I would be taught the truth and would consequently fall in love with Christ and his Church in full knowledge of the richness it beholds. Please do not let this keep happening. Please do not let these poor souls be lost to God. You, the priests and bishops of the Church, the vicars of Christ, must lead the people of the Church and this country to holiness, repentance and sainthood through the sanctifying grace of the sacraments as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ and entrusted to his apostles. Are you doing enough to ensure your success?

As I was interested in the permanent Diaconate, I attended an information session at [ - ] in about April 2015. I was interviewed twice by Fr [ - ], I gave him all the documents that were requested including a number of references and a brief on the Permanent Diaconate. As requested, I maintained a diary for two years on a monthly basis on my spiritual and Church activities forwarded these on a regular basis to him. I also attended the formation program for over two years at [ - ] and then at [ - ]. On a number of occasions we were told that every participant's files would be reviewed, we would be advised individually on our selection or not for further studies and development. During this period, I commenced some study at the Institute for Missions in Blacktown and a priest agreed to be my Spiritual Director. Although I attended the sessions as requested, it seemed that there was no organised program and no guidance on what I needed to

do. The last I heard was from Deacon [ - ] (RIP) that our files would be given to the team that was appointed to take over from Fr [ - ] and himself. To date, I have not been able to obtain any information on the current Diaconate program. There needs to be a national standard program for the Permanent Diaconate and participants must be encouraged to commence the necessary studies and also be serving in various ministries in their local parish. There should not be an emphasis on a degree in theology but take in to consideration the life/work experience other qualifications, the commitment to serving in the various ministries. In the near future, the Deacon could take over some of the administration duties of the parish priests so that they could focus on the spiritual growth of the faith community. There also a need for a national standard formation program for Acolytes/Senior Servers. I was surprised that some Dioceses interstate don't have Acolytes / Senior Servers. RCIA Program (briefly); I was requested by a friend (28 years) to be her sponsor for her to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist about 2/3 years ago, as I had spoken to her about my faith. Although her parents were Buddhist, she was baptised as a child to be enrolled in the local Catholic school. She with many others, were enrolled in a very short RCIA course, as sponsor I was not allowed to attend and accompany her on this very important faith journey. She and the other candidates were never taken to Mass nor were they introduced to the parishioners during the RCIA program. She was not encouraged nor prepared to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation in order to receive her first Holy Communion. I obtained all the information for her and spoke on the urgent need for her to make her confession. After much prayer and discussion, she went to confession on the day before her Confirmation. She said the experience was a non-event and was very disappointed. I went as Sponsor for her Confirmation which was administered by the PP.

My whole life has been shaped by the Church—and thank God for that! I am a revert to the faith following WYD08—God, the Holy Spirit, and her Holy Church changed my life and my identity for the better. But now I am coming to terms with my sexuality, while shaking at the idea of losing my belongingness and ministry in the Church as a result. I pray to God to show me his will in my everyday life, and I think that the Plenary Council and the future of the Church can foster a beautiful opportunity to create a community of disciples where I can be myself and a Catholic at the same time.

I normally attend a Novus Ordo Mass in my parish and years ago I used to receive communion in the hand but the I discovered the Church's teaching on the subject and discovered that the preferred method is on the tongue and that the Australian bishops had adopted a practice which had evolved out of an act of total disobedience to the Holy Father by the bishops of my native country even though it was inevitably permitted after the practice became widespread. And as a parent, I began to realize more and more that children and parents in Australia are actually being deceived by their shepherd when they are preparing children and parents for the sacrament of Holy Communion because they do not teach what the Church prefers for them, thus denying them what they are surely entitled to know so that they have the right and freedom to choose what the Church in its divine wisdom has preferred for them for extremely valid reasons that is a greater form of reverence. I then began to witness all kinds of other innovations in liturgical celebrations and whenever one researches the origin of these practices that they have no historical or valid explanation. The children in my parish are taught not to kneel during the

consecration and when Catholic High school students attend school Masses they now do not kneel. They also do not know the basic prayers because they do not respond. This is not an attack on them but their faith formation is in jeopardy and they are losing their Catholic identity and guess why?

Arriving in Australia in 1995, I was surprised to learn that Catholics are a minority. Majority of the population have no religion or don't practice any Faith. I was quite disturbed by that. I did not want to think that one of our children will become like that. When my son, then in Year 2, asked for help in his religion test, I was dumbfounded I did not know the answer. As a mother, I thought that if I can't help now, I won't be able to help my other children in the future. So I decided to connect with the parents of the school and attended free monthly Doctrine classes that the chaplain runs for mothers. I also attended Parenting Talks at school. This helped me understand my Faith better. I became more confident in explaining matters of the Faith to our kids. I shared that to other parents and I became actively involved in giving Talks to mums.

I have never really been actively involved in my Church until last year when I joined a mothers group with my Church [ - ] in [ - ] NSW. From there, it grew into such a lovely support group and a group of spirituality and deepening in faith. We all completed an Alpha course together at the Church house and it was such an amazing experience especially the receiving of the Holy Spirit weekend! From there, we went on to do the 8 week unlocking the Bible studies course, again so amazing to learn and understand how Jesus fulfils everything from the old testament and the scripture in the new testament. We are now completing the course on learning the 5 love languages to strengthen our marriages and family life! And I just can't wait for what we think of to do next. And I love being part of the Church community and being at Mass every Sunday and it is all credit to our amazing Monsignor and the wonderful community. All of this has helped deepen my faith and shaped me to do more and hopefully be better in all I do!!

My faith is everything to me and is entirely why I am the way I am. I could tell a million stories but ultimately it comes down to the fact that despite reading perspective after perspective, nothing makes so much rational sense as the Church's teachings.

As I said previously, the Church, my faith, it is my life and entire reason I am who I am today. What wholly makes me is this faith, along with the prayers of every single person who has ever prayed for me, and all the struggles that He has sent to shape me. Most importantly, prayer and reason, which have been so emphasised to me via my parents, my school and my priests, is what keeps me going and leaves me wholly convinced of the truth of God's word. I can find notions of sense and goodness, bits and pieces, remnants, from other belief systems and backgrounds, but in the end, the only place that makes sense from top to bottom is the Catholic Faith.

I. FAITH IN ACTION A. Being a member of Catholic community like CFCA, there should always be 'Faith in Action' to draw other people closer to God. Instead of being mechanical like routinely just going to Church, we should know and value the essence of the Mass and what it brings to us as a Catholic. B. We should value building on family and faith building. We should get the ones who have wandered back to our Church. The family plays an important role in building the Church and bring them to worship. C. It is difficult to evangelise and attract other people to join the community but we should have teachings on how to spread modern evangelisation and bring

more people closer to God. D. The learnings and teachings we hear in our community group are now being applied by members in a regular Mass or in the community. E. Get more people to action their faith and do works of mercy. F. Make the people rediscover the Gospel by adapting to the times and making teachings more attracting especially to the young ones. Modernize delivery of God's word. II. FINDING WAYS: A. There should be a deep discernment on addressing challenges to our faith. B. Catholic Churches in Australia must be able to find ways to get the people back and be able to mould them back to love God. C. We should know and be able to defend the Church against criticism and scepticism. D. We should find ways to make our practices relevant to each Catholic person's life. E. There was a time in the small country of the Philippines (one of the most Catholic nations in the world) when the attendance of Churchgoers are dwindling. The Church addressed this issue by endorsing other Catholic charismatic movements and organisations such as the Couples of Christ, El Shaddai, etc. These organisations were supported and guided by the Bishops as they introduced a more vibrant and dynamic way of spreading God's word and evangelising. 1. Charismatic groups should be embraced and supported by the Catholic leadership and not be territorial. 2. We should adapt our teachings to the modern times and address barriers. Investigate why previous Catholic have gone away from the Church. 3. Catholic should be bold and brave. Teach us how we can be.

I left the Church when I was a young teen but returned as a young adult because the Church was a place of consistency and unwavering faith. There is a security in knowing what you believe has not changed and will always be there for the prodigal sons.

I send my children to [ - ] school for girls and to a youth group called [ - ], They teach my daughters the faith and virtues of the Catholic Church they are Opus Dei. The children are regularly going to Mass and confession and are being guided by the priest, teachers and super numeries, it is the first time in my life that I feel like I have won the lottery. They truly love our children and are guiding them to grow up to be decent human beings that value God in every area of their lives. I wish for all school to be able to offer this support to all children at different schools. I feel that if the Church could continue to guide children at schools through tutors (super numeries), priests and teachers, it would keep the Church alive and more people would be more mentally and spiritually balanced.

Privilege to be a Catholic, God truly loves me

I have walked with the Lord since I was a child and he has revealed to me how to relate to him and how to live in this world while striving for the next. It has been a long process and has covered all aspects of being a sinful man in this world to how live by the spirit and beat this world while working towards the next. I need help for it to be successful as my job l's not just to know this myself but to share it, as the success is only achieved when we are united with others and there is more of us who are willing for the next world, not stuck loving this world or trying to fix it with band aids. I am not unique, there are many who know this, but we must unite to make a formidable army, not just stay as small groups fighting a losing battle sometimes against ourselves. The kingdom will come when earth is as it is in heaven. God knows man's heart, we must be united for this to happen!

I believe fear in God has helped me to be on the right path.

Could I just thank you for organising this Plenary Council and these listening and dialogue sessions? I am a Vatican II tragic and have spent tens of thousands of hours over my lifetime, mainly in unpaid voluntary endeavours at parish up to archdiocesan level seeking to rekindle that sense of excitement and hope that was so briefly ignited in the lay Church by that Council and which later got snuffed out by the elements who thought they alone had all the answers and want to wipe out that Council and take us back to the thinking and practices of the 1950s, the 1930s or the Council of Trent.

When I arrived at university I was faced with serious choices about my faith. Unlike high school where everything was laid out, it was a conscious decision to seek out the Catholic Society. I continue to be amazed by the generosity of the Sydney Archdiocese in supporting University chaplaincy services, where young Catholic can connect and grow in faith together.

The bishops to encourage the Catholic families in their mission to transmit the faith to their children as an answer to the problems of modern times; as St Paul says "Now it is impossible to please God without faith, since anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and rewards those who seek him."

It is time for significant change from the ridiculous state of Church structure these days. How power is managed, the actual role of women. Equality. Indivisible by our baptism. We are active in our Church and are nourished by it and aim to nourish others and be open to learning and discernment.

I have been blessed to grow up in a loving Catholic family. I went to great Catholic schools. I practice my faith regularly and I am proud of being Catholic. I am married with 4 children and my wife and I are working and loving the challenges of bringing a family into this world deep rooted in our beautiful Catholic faith. Our oldest son has a disability. We were shocked and disheartened when it was time to enrol our son in school when he was 3 years old. We decided to enrol our son in our mainstream local parish school. A parish we loved and were actively engaged in. When we approached our Catholic Principal we were rejected on the spot. The only reason was due to his disability. This is illegal based on Australian Law—see the "Disability Standards of Education" It was suggested we go to a "special school". We knew our Son and our family will not get the fullness of being part of our parish without being part of our parish school. So we tried a Catholic parish school in a suburb away that we visited from time to time ... and again we were rejected. My wife and I ended up going to 7 Catholic schools and it was only on the Seventh school that we had a glimmer of hope of being accepted. Though we had to move into the area first (a location well away from our original home) without even knowing if we would be accepted. So we left our extended family behind, our friends we had made over the many years and our beloved parish and start all over again with no family support around us. By the grace of God, our Son was accepted in the school and his brother followed him the following year. Our son is now in Year 3 and he is thriving. We are actively involved in our parish school as well as our parish and our family belongs. Our son belongs and feels at home at his parish. Our vision is to build his life around his parish that he loves so much. Our son has a strong faith, he loves going to Mass, participates in singing and praying, read the prayer of the faithful last year on one particular Sunday with his school peers and all this is because he has been included in the parish school since Kindergarten. Sadly, we know of many families like ours that were not so lucky or just plainly

gave up looking for a parish Catholic school that would accept their child with a disability. It is only once our Catholic bishops mandate an Australia wide policy that all children regardless of disability and/or severity will be accepted in their local Catholic parish school in the same classroom and teacher as their age based peers, doing the same work with the same opportunities and that segregation of children with a disability will cease that our Church will be a fully inclusive Church that is open to all especially the most vulnerable of all, children with a disability. Please don't close your ears to our families or our children whom we love and God especially loves. The evidence is very clear that the best place for all children is to be together.

30 years ago, I went through the RCIA program and unfortunately I learned absolutely nothing. It was 6 weeks of 1-hour meetings to talk about the weekly Gospel. That was it. It wasn't until many years later when my daughters started at an Independent Catholic school that I started understanding my faith because I was started getting spiritual formation from the school Chaplain. My eyes were open and I was visibly shaken by what I heard. I DID NOT KNOW! The Truth was never told to me! People will not change their ways if the Truth is watered down! It needs to slap you in the face to wake you up! Especially in these dark times. We ALL need to change. Education, Education, Education! This is the answer.

As a son of a Catholic/Jewish marriage, I can only think of how accepting my first Church was of that mother/father relationship. It continued until dad passed away.

My faith is tested most times. I cling to the hope that our world will be better, safer, happier, healthier, free from evil ... so far I just cling to hope.

Yes, by generally listening to what the clergy preach and not by what they do (this doesn't apply to all clergy but to far too many).

The Church in Australia is one of the best examples of a community in positive action in helping others in need. We now need to help our own community that is suffering the loss of confidence and faith in the Church due to the child sexual abuse.

I don't really have a story as such. I go to Church because I feel that I need to because of my sinful nature as a human. I find that Church is a friendly place filled with what I hope is like-minded people.

This part I neglected to add: that as a girl growing up in the 60s /70s I was influenced by the cultural revolution going on around me. Feminism attracted me, more so because I hated my father for failing to be the father I thought he should be. The other more subtle thing that was happening was the spreading of the occult particularly by way of Astrology and star signs. I was quite fascinated by the readings that were now common in our newspapers. Many people were starting to wear zodiac signs around their necks and identified themselves accordingly. We even wore them up to receive Holy Communion! This deception regarding the impact of dabbling in the occult I believe has dulled our spiritual eyes. Palm reading, Ouija board activities just a bit of harmless fun. NO. We read in Deuteronomy 18:10-11 that these things are strictly forbidden by God not just for Old Testament times but now. The rise of the Occult in movies that our young people are exposed to is having a grave effect on their spiritual and often physical wellbeing. When I asked for prayers at a Charismatic meeting for my father who was dying of cancer I

realised I was a sinner and I needed Jesus. When these dear people prayed for me I had a deliverance from the fascination of Astrology. I no longer identified myself as a Pisces but as a redeemed and cleansed child of God. The Kingdom of darkness is a reality and the occult is often a doorway to be ensnared by it. What I want, What I feel and What I think is idolatry. What does Gods word say? We need to know we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds through his Word. I work in a parish office—a family came to the office very troubled by manifestations (things moving around by themselves) happening in their home. At the time, the priest was away and I could not get on to the Exorcist of the Diocese. As we talked this daughter of the household had been playing Ouija board games at her Catholic school!! Not being able to contact anyone in authority we prayed a simple prayer of repentance and invoked the covering of the precious blood of Jesus and for peace, and indeed Peace came. So many of our young ones have become ensnared by the enemy of our Souls. It is the truth of Christ crucified that sets us free.

I'm from an anti-Catholic Protestant background in New Zealand. To learn piano my mother arranged for lessons for me at the local convent at a time when the faith was one of fear of damnation and God was a vengeful old man with a very big stick. An old nun, who used to plant pansies, gave me a lesson, which stayed with me all these years and sparked my curiosity. When I asked her why she was planting ugly coloured pansies, she just smiled and said that every pansy was a creation of God and beautiful. All I needed to do was look closely to find that beauty. She added that we needed to take the time to look closely at people, to find God's beauty in them. That was one powerful lesson! It took me many years to act on my curiosity about this fearful religion that could have such a breath-taking concept. The really big lesson I've learned, is that what God wants, God will get. The Holy Spirit always has a Plan B—even if it takes time measured in years. I became a Catholic at 54 years of age. I hear parents tell me how disappointed they are that their children have left the Church. I tell them there is always time. God won't forget them—He didn't forget me and He won't forget their child. I was adopted as a baby and the need to feel a part of a family has always been strong in my life. I believe it is strong in everyone's life and that's why I feel we should strengthen the sense of community, of family in our parishes. Having the latest and greatest IT gadget, a yearly promotion, a bigger car—never mean the same as having friends chat with you, as having someone to pray with you, or just hearing a simple 'Happy Birthday.' Or in my case, having an elderly nun take the time to explain why every pansy is beautiful. Someone's time is a most precious gift. If we can learn that and if we can gift others with a few minutes of graciousness, then we will do much to bring kindness and forgiveness into the world. YAY!!!

When I first arrived in the [ - ] parish, Mount Druitt in 2000, with my recently deceased wife, it was a day of blessing. In those days, we didn't have GPS or mobile phones, we moved into our new house with a street directory and tried to work out where our parish was. My wife was Hindu and supported me in my Catholic religion. At the end of the 9am Mass, it was announced that all members of the Church community could stay back for a celebration of Father [ - ]'s 10 years stay as parish priest. I took it as a day of welcoming back into our Catholic Church—a blessed day for myself.

Our parish has been characterised by diminishment over the last 25. Cranky, sick, ill-formed and disillusioned priests have done little more than say Mass, all the time hanging on, sometimes aggressively, to clerical power and privilege. At the same time, people left the parish and Church consistently looking for spiritual nourishment in private alternate ways.

I was brought up in a parish that was second-to-none in its passing on of the faith to parishioners and their families i.e. [ - ] N.S.W. under the [ - ]. The clergy were engaged in regular home parish visitations, they emphasised the sacraments, they were holy, there was a vast ministry to youth and beyond, Church observances were devotional and reverent, there were missions, families went to Mass together as a unit. We were a close-knit community with priests who really cared for our welfare. They bonded with their parishioners and all struggled and worked together to provide the necessities and facilities that are now enjoyed in that parish, often with little money but with lots of enthusiasm and personal sacrifice. Parents struggled to send their kids to Catholic schools and often went without to enable this to happen. The Catholic Church seemed to play a bigger role in society back then and had more influence. The religious orders of nuns and brothers generally ran the schools and imparted the tenets of the faith and religious knowledge to their students. It was a fairly homogeneous Church that was more united and in my experience, more successful, in passing on the Faith to the next generation than is now the case.

I have worked as a counsellor for many years and witnessed the intense grief experienced by a loved one's suicide that is sometimes exacerbated by a very unhelpful pastoral response which lays blame on the victim and talks about sin and the "old teachings" that meant a Requiem Mass could not be offered and they could not be buried in a Catholic cemetery. Families need spiritual support and acknowledgment of their loved one. We have tried to have Masses and liturgies provided for those bereaved by suicide and always face so many hurdles, which I think comes from fear and misunderstanding and perhaps lack of confidence by the clergy or pastoral workers in addressing the concerns of the bereaved.

I am a practicing Catholic and have lived my faith for all my years. I have shared friendships with many priests in this time and also professional relationships. What I see is a fundamental problem in the way priests have been selected and trained in our Church in Australia and importing priests from other countries is not always countering the problem of clericalism. Our priests (like all of us) need our support and professional support through methods such as pastoral supervision and ongoing professional development.

I would like a clearer understanding of Mortal sin. I sometimes suffer from scruples but the formation I have had about sexuality and morals I believe have given me grief and anxiety. I have often rushed down to Confession because I think I may have committed a mortal sin by watching a movie with sex scenes or nudity in it. I am not talking about pornography, although some of the films do have quite explicit scenes. But to watch them surely is not a mortal sin where God would cast me off to hell if I died! I go to Mass regularly, pray and strive often to help my neighbour. I do love the Church and am proud to be Catholic, but this area about mortal sin worries me. What about the thousands that don't go to Church when they have been brought up in the Church, the many that are not abiding by contraception laws, are they all going to hell?

In summary, we must continue to proclaim that: God is personally present to each of us just as He is present throughout the universe. God brought us into existence because he loves us. Jesus, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, became man to show us the loving ways of God and to redeem us. He is Mercy itself. Just as Jesus allowed God's Spirit to work in his earthly life, we must allow this same Spirit to work in us and be ambitious for the higher gifts he offers. The basic truth that the Catholic Church needs to proclaim is: • to live the message of Pentecost. • prayer is an essential part of Christian living. • as Jesus was touched and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we too must allow ourselves to be touched by and empowered by the Holy Spirit in these modern times. • our priests must be freed to allow themselves to be touched by and empowered by the Holy Spirit in these modern times and moreover be able to demonstrate this empowerment to their people. • God is willing to reach out to his people in intimate and tangible ways It is time to listen to Pope Francis and embrace the Spirituality of Pentecost

My wife died in hospital some time ago. The support of my friends and local parish community helped me deal with the adjustments these life situations require. Of particular help was being encouraged to have greater awareness of the communion of saints because even the just dead live as holy souls and can help us who struggle to live their faith in this life.

7. I've seen during my years of experience as a father and as a businessman; that any product or idea that is not reproduced as it was originally will eventually be labelled as fake. A fake "Rolex" watch will immediately be picked up as fake. Approved liturgy and scripture is a unifying factor amongst Catholic. Any deviation from the approved version becomes a source of disunity. If one or two in the choir are singing from a different hymn sheet, or are not following the conductor, then the whole choir will sound out of sync. 8. One of my closest friends is a married priest in an Eastern Catholic rite. Although this particular priest is a very good and holy man—and what he has achieved in his life is close to a miracle—nevertheless one can observe in hindsight how difficult the journey has been for him—being torn between being totally devoted to his wife and family and bring totally devoted to God's service. Rather than attempting to attract souls that might not be destined to heed the Church's call in this specific time, we should highlight the positive aspects of celibacy to the faithful. 9. I continue to be amazed—when I reflect on the feedback I get from those gentlemen who attend my spiritual talks—as to how little do normal good Catholic know of their faith? So many faithful Catholics would benefit greatly if they understood the catechism in a better way. 10. With the advent of technology- women today are able to fall pregnant without taking part in the conjugal act—but this possibility will always be a biological impossibility for men. The faith of so many souls in doubt would be strengthened when they learn in practical terms that God did in fact discriminate between Male and Female—and it was humans who denigrated the role of women, but it was Our Lord Jesus Christ who restored Females to their equal status with men. So many souls will benefit when they realise that just as biologically—only women can give birth to another human person, so it is spiritually that only men can perform priestly functions. 11. As someone who has experienced pain from a close perspective (two bouts of cancer in the last ten years)—I am acutely of the importance of pain—and how pain helps the human body overcome a specific disease by attacking it. The Faithful public will gain so much by understanding the existence and definition of sin (which is to the soul the same as what pain is to the body) and then discovering the true meaning of mercy—and how it always starts with being

merciful on oneself. 12. Just as evil forces have managed to sway the minds of so many into the deception about the true nature and purpose of sex—the same faithful public will gain so much when they hear the Church’s opinion on this subject- in a calm, positive and serene climate.

1—As we visit various parishes, we notice variances in culture, method, preparation and delivery of various sacraments and other services (including Mass). The culture of a parish is mainly based on who’s in charge (parish priest). There is no consistent approach. Some churches have a cry room while others have kids running all over the place. Other behaviours at Mass such as inappropriate clothing, mobile phone ringing and plenty of other distractions. Some church buildings are in need of a re-vamp and wheelchair access. 2—We like we are part of a Church that is happy to sit on the side line, not happy to talk about an issue and not ready to be evangelise what the gospel says on controversial issues. Are we too looking of the popular vote? 3—Every day we notice a lack of basic understanding of what the Catholic faith teaches. Faith education is not an ongoing part of being a practising Catholic. Recent example was the lack of understand why gay marriages cannot be accepted by the Catholic Church. Prayer habits are not where they need to be in most Catholic schools and the daily Mass is not part of the daily schedule (reading time or Mass option for students). Prayers such as the Angelus should be prayed morning and noon at all Catholic schools. Daily rosary during the months of May and October. Adequate amount of time teaching the faith at our schools. More students are entering the Catholic education system, including ACU, who are not coming for Catholic families. Catholic schools are being run with financial targets as a priority instead of a missionary approach to Catholic faith education. The time allocated for religious education at public schools is not run in a professional manner. While most volunteers are trying their best, we hear of instances where these are not run in a professional manner and we should have professional teachers employed by the Church to fulfil or at least manage this important opportunity to share the faith. 4—It is well known that once children receive the sacrament of Holy Communion you hardly see them until confirmation. Again, once the children are confirmed, they disappear and maybe see them once every few years at Christmas or Easter or maybe when they get married. You see them again when they have their own babies for baptism. Are parents really ready to commit? We found ourselves in a situation where some sacraments require years of preparation and similarly important sacraments being received with only a couple of hour’s preparation. A good example is the preparation for priesthood against preparing a couple for marriage. Another example is the preparation for sacraments received through an RCIA program compared to that of year 5-6 student doing confirmation. Are we handing out sacraments too easily with the hope that the Holy Spirit does the work? 5 and 6—refer to attached full document. Also more details for points 1 -4 in the attached document

I feel very privileged to be a Catholic in Australia. I would like to share how the Legion of Mary has shaped and formed me in my understanding of the Gospel and how to have a greater love for Jesus and our Blessed Mother Mary. We know as Legionaries of Mary that Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother shapes and forms us to be true copies of Her son. When we don't live up to this love how grateful I am for the sacrament of Penance. Sadly, the younger generation have not had this privilege and I am not sure why the situation got so bleak. I would love to hear more priests speaking about the absolutely free gift of Grace that God is longing to give them through

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|---|
| <p>this sacrament of healing. I am very grateful to have encountered faithful priests who are true shepherds like Jesus. They keep guiding and helping families, through their good example and genuine caring attitude.</p>  |
| <p>Yes, I have been a member of the Legion of Mary and found that it is the best organisation that can lead the faithful to Holiness, sanctity and the salvation of souls. I have come to learn my faith, live my faith and bring many souls to Jesus through Mary. Esp. in the Nursing Home when on Communion Service, people who have been away from their faith over 50 years have been brought back through the visit of the Legion of Mary. Praise God.</p>  |
| <p>I had the good fortune to meet Fr [ - ] when he was a university chaplain and a parish priest at [ - ]. I am old enough to remember Vatican II and Pope John XXIII. Ted's book "Who is worthy?" deserves a close reading. I am greatly encouraged by the approach of Pope Francis.</p>   |
| <p>I pray that the Catholic Church will have a Universal Set of HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION. I came from the Philippines, the US and Australia. And we have different HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION.</p>  |
| <p>I have been an active member of the Church and proud to call myself a Catholic. My husband and I have been married for 39 years and attend Church every Sunday. We have raised two children sent them to Catholic schools and they attend Church on occasion. One of our children's marriages broke down and ended in divorce so my concern is that sometime in the future marriage of divorced Catholic will possible in the Church.</p>  |
| <p>I feel lucky because I have been gifted with faith and I put my faith in Jesus and not in large organizations. I feel Jesus in my life at times very strongly.</p>   |
| <p>I was away from the Church for 30 years and believe that God called me back to the Catholic faith for a reason, my salvation, I am proud to be a Catholic, I have been back for 15 years and believe God is guiding me to better things.</p>   |
| <p>My immersion was as a three-year-old, I was taken from my parents and placed in a Catholic home. I am still a practising Catholic and love being a Catholic. I love the traditions and the celebration of the MASS.</p>  |
| <p>I have been more supported by many great priests in my life. I know this is not everyone's experience but at all the different times in my life there has been someone there to support me and offer a greater perspective on whatever I am going through. Sometimes I need to be challenged, sometimes I just need a kind word. Particularly in the sacrament of Confession, I have found the greatest support and graces to live out my Christian faith.</p>   |
| <p>In my experience, parents who send their children to Catholic schools with the expectation that Catholic teachers would teach the Catholic faith, have been sadly disappointed. Many have watched helplessly as their children leave school with little or no real understanding of what the Church teaches or the reason for those teachings. Yet, still we hear more and more strident, dissenting voices calling out for more of the same failed and destructive strategies to be implemented. Instead of listening to each other to discern what is to be done, how about we listen to Christ.</p> |
| <p>My son will not baptise his daughter because of the Churches attitude to LGIT Catholics.</p>   |

My faith was shaped by my single parent mother's taking me to Mass and to Catholic schools—the Mercy Sisters. At the age of 45, I attended a "Renewal of Faith" course to understand Vatican II changes. And I then experienced and understood how much God loved me.

The record of abuse in the Church is sickening. How can we make it stop?

I personally made the commitment to my faith at the time of confirmation and have not wavered because I see the bigger picture. Not everyone is the same. I have served in a number of roles in various parishes including parish Council, Liturgy writing (Advent, 3rd Rite of Reconciliation, etc.), Reading, Eucharistic Ministry etc. I have been spat on and strongly pressured by members of Opus Dei because of my mainstream practices being told that I had been "reported on to the Vatican". I constantly come into contact with parishioners who are disillusioned by the ordained but who won't speak up because they either don't want to rock the boat or "out" themselves in relation to their views. I have been actively involved in parishes that work hard to achieve their outcomes and parishes that are quite happy to let everything fall apart. It cuts me deeply to see parish leaders let that happen, and I for one cannot let that happen. Before one Mass, I attended a few months ago the rostered people had not turned up. I arrived about 5 minutes before Mass, saw this and went to the Deacon to offer my services. He actually said that it was better to not have anyone do data, read, commentate, Eucharist, etc. etc. I could not let this happen. Celebration of the Mass is supposed to be inspirational—not deflating by lack of interest. I had all the roles filled with 1 minute to spare before Mass. This same Deacon is now an ordained priest—from the Opus Dei sect of the Catholic Church. My own personal life has been no picnic. However, in my time of need after a marriage breakdown, the parish team of the parish I was in withdrew all support from me thanks to idle chatter at the direction of the then parish priest. (My husband had left me after 18 years for another woman. How that makes me the problem for the Church, I'll never know.) Another experience I had was that during 10 years of serving as a reader/commentator and Eucharistic Minister in one parish I had never experienced any positivity from the Senior Server—only negative comments. It's hard to serve under those circumstances, particularly when the offending party is not abreast of proper procedures—ultimately the Assistant priest stepped in and put things right. The most disappointing experience of all recently is my former parish priest not wanting to do interfaith outreach and actively discouraging my participation in the parish Plenary works by making himself unavailable for several months, after he himself had nominated me. I tried to talk our differences through, but the parish priest kept avoiding the subject and putting other people into the mix. In summary, it's important to support those laity who are willing to work to achieve the Church's objectives and we are owed honesty and respect for our work—this includes respectful discussion of differences if necessary—and of course that's what the Plenary Sessions are about.

My granddaughter is one of these children and wants to make her First Communion this year. Now the parents have another problem as to how this will happen! I have attended Mass on Sundays when the children from the Catholic school are there with their parents in preparation for reconciliation and I am amazed by how full the Church is compared to normal Sundays, so I ask where are these parents on every other Sunday of the year. Some parents are being punished for telling the truth but the priest is only hurting the child and the future of the Catholic Church.

The experience of daily prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament together with the reception of the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion are the most influential experiences of my Faith.

I was brought up in the fifties and sixties so I go way back. I loved the Latin Masses and I loved singing in the choir. Children's' choirs are lovely. However, we have older men singing in our choir. Years ago, we were selling our home because of retrenchment. We had an auction and no bids. We couldn't afford to stay there. So I said a novena for 9 days to St Jude and on the ninth day, we had an offer. Not what we wanted but good enough to move. We took the offer and moved from [ - ] to [ - ] [ - ] NSW. Being involved with the Church as a Senior Server, Eucharistic Minister and Chairperson on the parish Council, doing Communion Services and taking Holy Communion to the sick amongst other ministries has enriched my religious life. I thank God for giving me this opportunity. I am 68 and suffer from depression so I have had to give up a lot of ministries. I still do a couple. But my husband and I have moved again and I am at my Daughter's place waiting to buy something smaller. I have been distressed leaving my home. God must have something in mind. I can only pray.

The most important thing that has happened to me on my journey is the discovery of the teachings of John Main OSB and subsequently the existence of The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) and the guidance of Laurence Freeman OSB, the Community's current director. Through this Community, I have discovered the most meaningful insights into what being a Christian means and also had my mind and my heart opened to truly inspiring people like Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating, Julian of Norwich, Richard Rohr, John Cassian, Rowan Williams and many more. I am an oblate of the WCCM and an active member of our 'Community Without Walls' which extends across the world. (By the way, in the small booklet on the Plenary Council produced by the Diocese of [ - ], on page 41, there is a description of Christian Meditation and a reference to WCCM. Unfortunately, your description of the practice is entirely wrong! What you describe there is Ignation meditation. Could I suggest that you also visit the WCCM website, which you quote? <http://wccm.org/> where you will find a clear description of the practice as taught by John Main OSB. Thanks.

We are fortunate to live in richly multi-cultural parish in [ - ] [ - ] parish [ - ], conducted by Jesuit priests). It is a parish full of life and passion, due not only to fine leadership by the Jesuits but also to the diversity of cultures within the parish, cultures where families are valued, children are always included and the faith is strong. As a result, our liturgies and parish life are rich and varied. Unlike many parishes, there is a range of ages at Sunday Masses, due to the large number of younger families and children. After each Mass, all children come forward for a special individual blessing by the priest or parish assistant—many children! While this is delightful and refreshing, we do notice the absence of Indigenous Catholics, in a suburb which has the highest urban Aboriginal population in Australia. Something is missing. Similarly, while many cultures are represented in our parish, they do tend to form cultural ghettos. While there are many different cultural groups (e.g. Tongan choir, Samoan choir), there is not a great deal of truly multi-cultural interchange, in spite of the best efforts of the priests. While we are blessed by living in a parish which is more alive than most, we do reflect many of the issues which beset the wider Australian Church! Let us finish where we began ... We are truly blessed to live and work in a community

which reflects the diversity of our community in western Sydney. We come from different countries and cultures, we speak a diversity of languages, we represent different generational groups and states of life. Somewhat like the house Churches, established by Saint Paul, we are far from perfect and we have our struggles to form a truly Christian community, to love all equally as Jesus did, and to minister and live the joy of the gospel. We are a hope-filled community, living in a hope-filled Australian Church. We pray that this Plenary Council will be a blessing for us, for all Australian Catholic and for all who call this land home.

I am disappointed that the Church in Australia is weak and does not contribute to sustaining and enriching the faith of Catholic as it should. My children would never have the faith if I had relied on the Church and the so called Catholic school system. A great effort is required in bringing back the faith to the schools starting from the staff and then down to students and their families. It's never too late to start on this project. It is being done in communities outside of the parish (but of course still within the Church). The tough truths and doctrines of the faith should not be watered down. It should be upheld so that the grace of God will be really experienced when the laity live according to His Will and Commandments.

Having more time when my children grew up, I started searching for the spiritual truth in my life. I was born and raised Catholic, but my only teaching of the faith was the catechism classes in preparation for my first holy communion. I had so many questions and finally thought I found the answers in a new age movement. Soon I realised this was not the Truth I was seeking. I was then introduced to EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) a 24 hr network of true Catholic programs including devotions, daily Mass, the Holy Rosary, Bible studies, documentary on saints, Catholic teachings, Papal Masses and much more. This opened a new Catholic world to me! I was getting answers to my questions. I was home!!!!!! I purchased recommended books and studied our Catholic faith, prayed more, read the Bible for the first time in a recommended time line, so I understood the mercy and love of God for all of humanity beginning in the garden of Eden. I began to spend a lot of time in front of the Tabernacle and one day God helped me understand the Trinity in relation to His plan for the human family. I became a changed person and my love for God through His grace increases daily as I continue to learn and grow in my faith. There are certainly some Churches and priests in Australia that have helped me and have good faith communities, but sadly these are not the norm.

## 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 Parramatta.

| Country            | Number of respondents |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Australia          | 522                   |
| Austria            | 1                     |
| Bahrain            | 1                     |
| Belgium            | 1                     |
| Canada             | 1                     |
| Colombia           | 1                     |
| Croatia            | 1                     |
| Czech Republic     | 1                     |
| Ecuador            | 1                     |
| Egypt              | 2                     |
| Ethiopia           | 1                     |
| Fiji               | 1                     |
| France             | 1                     |
| Germany            | 2                     |
| Hong Kong (S.A.R.) | 1                     |
| Hungary            | 1                     |
| India              | 17                    |
| Indonesia          | 5                     |
| Ireland            | 5                     |
| Italy              | 4                     |
| Japan              | 2                     |
| Jordan             | 1                     |
| Kenya              | 1                     |
| Lebanon            | 15                    |
| Malaysia           | 4                     |

| Country  | Number of respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Malta  | 14                    |
| Mauritius  | 2                     |
| Mexico   | 1                     |
| Netherlands  | 5                     |
| New Zealand  | 10                    |
| Pakistan   | 2                     |
| Peru   | 2                     |
| Philippines  | 65                    |
| Poland   | 5                     |
| Portugal   | 1                     |
| Republic of Korea                                    | 1                     |
| Samoa  | 1                     |
| Singapore  | 2                     |
| South Africa   | 3                     |
| South Korea  | 1                     |
| Sri Lanka  | 19                    |
| Sudan  | 6                     |
| Syrian Arab Republic                                 | 2                     |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 16                    |
| United States of America                             | 2                     |
| Viet Nam   | 2                     |
| Not stated   | 71                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>826</b>            |

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

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

| Name of group   | Group size |
|---|------------|
| Our Lady of the Angels Rouse Hill                       | 5,000      |
| Mary Queen of the Family Parish Blacktown               | 1,600      |
| Our Lady Queen of Peace Greystanes NSW                  | 352        |
| Bread of Life Fellowship                                | 350        |
| Campion College Alumni Association                      | 240        |
| Bonaventure Academy                                     | 191        |
| Alpha and Omega Bible/Prayer Group                      | 150        |
| Parish of St John 23rd - PPC                            | 150        |
| Lowana Study Centre                                     | 100        |
| Family of Divine Word                                   | 100        |
| Lourdes Young Adults Group                              | 90         |
| Community of the Risen Lord Sydney                      | 70         |
| Our Lady of the Way Parish, Emu Plains                  | 70         |
| STA Parish  | 60         |
| Parish of Baulkham Hills                                | 60         |
| St Monica's, Richmond Parish, NSW                       | 50         |
| St Monica's, Parish of Richmond, NSW                    | 50         |
| Neo-catechumenal Community St Michael's, Baulkham Hills | 50         |
| 2 Vietnamese Communities                                | 42         |
| God's Love  | 40         |
| The Parish of Richmond                                  | 37         |
| The Parish of Richmond                                  | 36         |
| Our Lady of Lourdes Young Adults, Seven Hills           | 25         |
| Montgrove College Year 12                               | 25         |
| Our Lady of Lourdes, Seven Hills, NSW                   | 22         |
| Our Lady of Lourdes, Seven Hills, NSW 3rd sub           | 22         |
| St Madeleine's Parish listening session                 | 22         |
| Parish of Seven Hills, NSW                              | 21         |
| St Bernadette's Parish, Dundas Valley                   | 21         |
| Association of the Holy Family of Nazareth              | 21         |
| Central Deanery   | 20         |
| Schoenstatt Movement of Australia                       | 20         |
| Central Deanery Council of the Diocese of Parramatta    | 20         |
| Leonay Men's Fellowship group                           | 20         |

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

| Name of group   | Group size |
|---|------------|
| Tongan Catholic Community, Plumpton   | 18         |
| Families group (monthly meetings)   | 18         |
| BASICGIFT   | 18         |
| Couples for Christ Australia  | 17         |
| Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Wentworthville   | 16         |
| Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School Parent Body   | 16         |
| St Gerard's School Carlingford staff  | 15         |
| The Plumpton Antioch  | 15         |
| Deepening the Faith Group at Mary Immaculate, Quakers Hill  | 15         |
| Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group  | 15         |
| Good Shepherd Parish  | 14         |
| Mirrabooka Study Centre   | 14         |
| Mirrabooka Study Centre   | 14         |
| Parish Pastoral Council for the Parishes of Holy Trinity Granville and Holy Family East Granville | 13         |
| Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Kellyville 2155  | 13         |
| St. Aidan's Eucharistic Youth Ministry  | 13         |
| Mirrabooka Study Centre   | 13         |
| Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations  | 12         |
| Couples for Christ Australia (NSW Hills Chapter)  | 12         |
| Catholic Women's League   | 12         |
| St John 23rd Parish Stanhope Gardens  | 12         |
| Rydalmen  | 12         |
| Legion of Mary Praesidium Marayong one  | 12         |
| Couples for Christ Australia, Parramatta East Cluster, Blacktown Chapter household                | 12         |
| Mixed Fellowship and a cuppa  | 12         |
| Legion of Mary  | 12         |
| The Legion of Mary  | 12         |
| SSE19 Teens   | 11         |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park   | 11         |
| Life Ascending, Plumpton  | 10         |
| St Finbar's, Glenbrook & Our Lady of the Way, Emu Plains, NSW parishioners                        | 10         |
| Catholic Charismatic Renewal Diocesan Service Team  | 10         |
| Legion of Mart  | 10         |
| Senior Group  | 10         |
| Couples for Christ Australia  | 10         |
| ROCKS Young Adults group  | 10         |
| St Finbar's, Glenbrook, Youth Group   | 10         |

| <b>Name of group</b>   | <b>Group size</b> |
|--|-------------------|
| St Finbar's, Glenbrook, Youth Group                              | 10                |
| Our Lady of the Way school staff                                 | 10                |
| Couples For Christ   | 10                |
| CFCA   | 10                |
| St Vincent de Paul - Stanhope Gardens                            | 10                |
| Family Group   | 10                |
| Catholic Charismatic Renewal Parramatta                          | 9                 |
| Couples for Christ NSW Hawkesbury chapter                        | 9                 |
| Parish group   | 8                 |
| St. Paul the Apostle   | 8                 |
| St Paul the Apostle Winston Hills Group 1                        | 8                 |
| All Saints of Africa Centre Community Meeting - 30 November 2018 | 8                 |
| Xavier College, Llandilo, NSW                                    | 8                 |
| Fresh Perspectives   | 8                 |
| Fresh Perspectives   | 8                 |
| Aquinas Court  | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Finbars Listening + Dialogue Group B                          | 8                 |
| St Finbars Listening and Dialogue Group                          | 8                 |
| Legion of Mary   | 8                 |
| Buhagiar Family Our Lady of the Rosary Parish St Marys           | 8                 |
| Corpus Christi Parish, Cranebrook                                | 8                 |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park                                | 8                 |
| St Paul the Apostle Parish                                       | 8                 |
| Altar Society  | 8                 |
| Altar Society  | 8                 |
| Fresh Perspectives   | 7                 |
| Monica Guy and friends   | 7                 |
| Social Justice Ministry  | 7                 |
| Glennon Stuart Family  | 7                 |
| El-Sabbagh Family  | 7                 |
| Corpus Christi Parish NSW  | 7                 |

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

| Name of group  | Group size |
|--|------------|
| The Legion of Mary (Our Lady Queen of All Nations Presidium) | 7          |
| Marisa's Bible Study Group                                   | 7          |
| St Finbars   | 6          |
| St Bernadette's  | 6          |
| Anglicans  | 6          |
| Legion of Mary Plumpton II                                   | 6          |
| Mathias Family   | 6          |
| Bible study group  | 6          |
| Corpus Christi Parish  | 6          |
| Corpus Christi Parish NSW                                    | 6          |
| Holy Spirit St Clair Family ministry                         | 6          |
| Corpus Christi Cranebrook NSW                                | 6          |
| Baltasar   | 6          |
| RCIA TEAM at ST JOHN 23RD                                    | 6          |
| Joanne Habib   | 6          |
| St Bernadette's Parish Castle Hill                           | 6          |
| Men's Ministry Group   | 6          |
| "Long Time Joyous Friends"                                   | 5          |
| Parishioners Holy Family Emerton                             | 5          |
| Fresh Perspectives   | 5          |
| St. Paul the Apostle   | 5          |
| Gilroy Catholic College                                      | 5          |
| Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust                   | 5          |
| East Timor Committee   | 5          |
| A dialogue encounter group                                   | 5          |
| Sacred Heart Parish, Luddenham/Warragamba                    | 5          |
| Small group from OLOW Emu Plains                             | 5          |
| Corpus Christi Parish Cranebrook NSW                         | 5          |
| Lattouf Family   | 5          |
| Zalloua family   | 5          |
| St Monica's Seniors  | 5          |
| Parish Pastoral Council                                      | 5          |
| PPC  | 5          |
| Chinese Chaplaincy (Bible Camp Discussion Group)             | 5          |
| Good Shepherd Primary  | 5          |
| St Luke's Catholic Faith Community                           | 4          |
| Sacred Heart Blackheath                                      | 4          |

| Name of group   | Group size |
|---|------------|
| Listening Group Sacred Heart Parish Blackheath session held 2 December 2019 | 4          |
| Elias siblings  | 4          |
| Basic Gift  | 4          |
| Group of 4 Friends  | 4          |
| Parents from Blacktown  | 4          |
| Irugalbandara Family  | 4          |
| The Victoria Family   | 4          |
| Marist Community Mount Druitt   | 4          |
| Radulski Family   | 3          |
| Circle  | 3          |
| M & D Christian   | 2          |
| St Columba's  | 2          |
| Mr Eamonn Keane and Mrs Patricia Keane                                      | 2          |
| Mendieta Family   | 2          |
| Yumol Family  | 2          |
| Chehade Family  | 2          |
| Women of St Paul the Apostle Parish   | 2          |
| Peter and Annette Goode   | 2          |
| Family Group  | 2          |
| St Bernadette's Parish Lalor Park   | 1          |
| Sisters of Charity  | Not Stated |
| Mary Queen of the Family Parish   | Not Stated |
| Mary Queen of the Family Parish   | Not Stated |
| Mary Queen of the Family Parish   | Not Stated |



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