



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

Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

A Report to the Diocese of Wollongong

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About this Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trudy Dantis

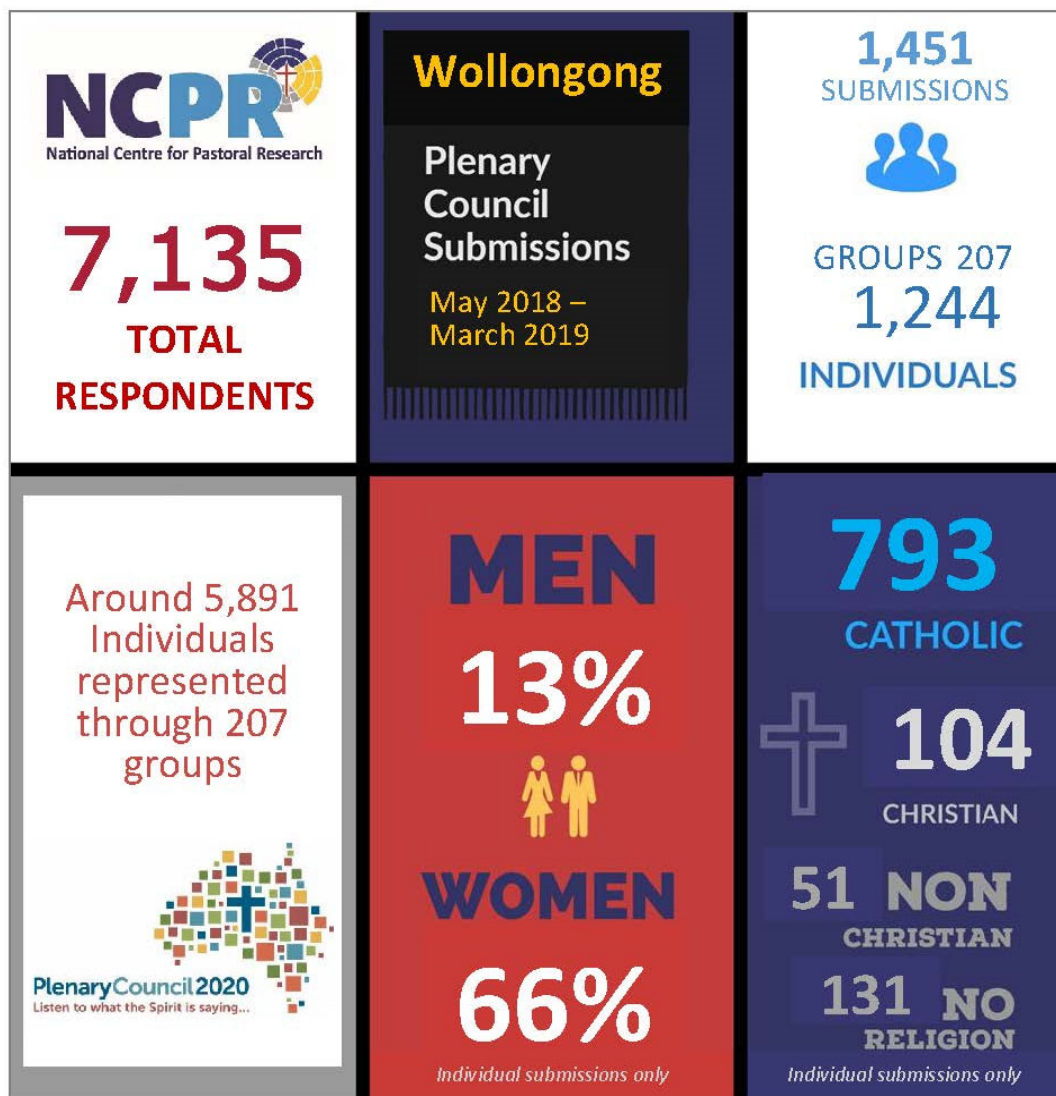
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Diocesan Submissions Summary Snapshot: May 2018—March 2019



Number of Submissions Received - all Australia

Across Australia, we received a total of 17,457 completed submissions from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 9,690 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue encounter. Another 2,113 were unsure if they had, so we presume they had not. Less than 26 per cent of the total number of respondents (4,402) indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 17,457 submissions, 4,699 were from groups or organisations and 12,758 submissions were from individuals. There were over 209,170 people represented through the 4,699 groups, bringing the total number of participants in the “Listening and Dialogue” process to over 222,000.

Number of Submissions Received - Wollongong

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 Wollongong, we received a total of 1,451 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 1,010 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 184 were unsure if they had. About 255 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 1,451 submissions, 207 submissions were from groups or organisations and 1,244 submissions were from individuals. There were 5,891 people represented through the 207 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 7,135.

Table 1: Number of Submissions	
Total number of submissions received	1,451
<i>Participated in Listening & Dialogue Encounter?</i>	
Yes	1,010
No	255
Not sure	184
Not stated	2
Total	1,451
Submissions received from groups or organisations	207
Submissions received from individuals	1,244
Total	1,451

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 1,244 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 Wollongong. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 53 per cent (657) were received from those aged under 25 years. The most number of submissions within this age range were received from the 13-15 years age group (339 responses). It is likely this is due to the large number of responses received through schools in the diocese.

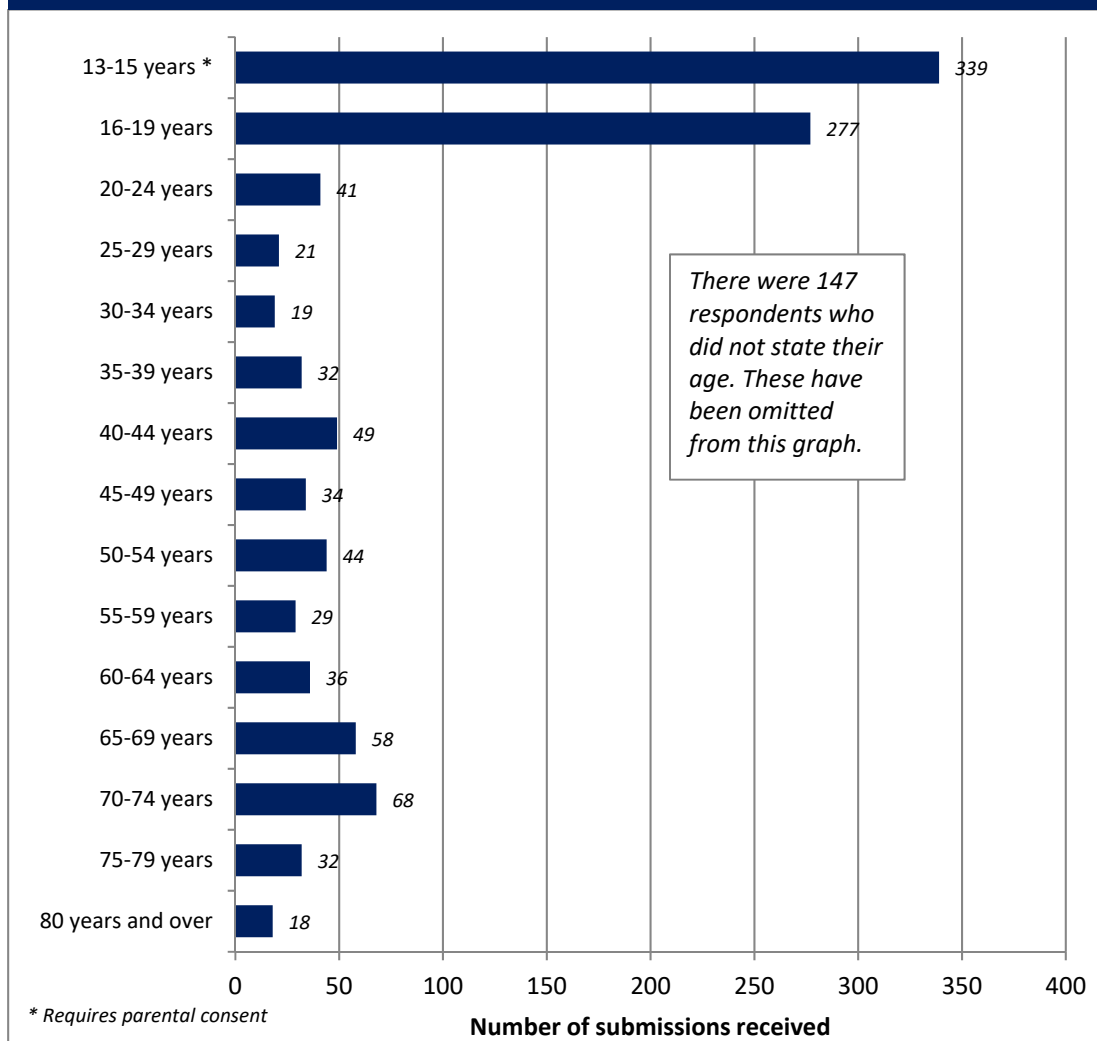
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were 277 individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

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. Where schools were involved, some schools sought parental consent before participating. Details of that consent was provided to the NCPR office by those schools. There were 339 individual submissions made from this age group in your diocese.

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

13-15 years *	339
16-19 years	277
20-24 years	41
25-29 years	21
30-34 years	19
35-39 years	32
40-44 years	49
45-49 years	34
50-54 years	44
55-59 years	29
60-64 years	36
65-69 years	58
70-74 years	68
75-79 years	32
80 years and over	18
Not stated	147
Total	1,244

* Requires parental consent

Fig. 1: Age groups (individual responses only)

Sex of Respondents

Approximately two-thirds of the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (66%), while a further 13 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 159 men and 821 women who made submissions. One hundred and twenty respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 144 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)

Female	821
Male	159
Prefer not to say	120
Not stated	144
Total	1,244

Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (69%) were born in Australia. Just over 10 per cent came from other countries, while around 21 per cent did not state their birthplace. See *Appendix 1* for the full list of countries of birth. Table 4b provides a summary of the countries of birth by English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries*, while Tables 4c and 4d indicate the countries of birth of the respondent's mother and father respectively.

Table 4a: Countries of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	854	68.6
India	9	0.7
Ireland	7	0.6
Netherlands	10	0.8
New Zealand	8	0.6
Philippines	10	0.8
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	26	2.1
Other Countries	55	4.4
Not stated	265	21.3
Total	1,244	100.0

Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	854	68.6
Other English-speaking country	47	3.8
Non-English-speaking country	78	6.3
Not stated	265	21.3
Total	1,244	100.0

Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	700	56.3
Other English-speaking country	63	5.1
Non-English-speaking country	165	13.3
Not stated	316	25.4
Total	1,244	100.0

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

Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	645	51.8
Other English-speaking country	86	6.9
Non-English-speaking country	192	15.4
Not stated	321	25.8
Total	1,244	100.0

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Table 5 shows the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from your diocese who made submissions. At the close of submissions there were 27 individuals who identified themselves in this way, representing just over two per cent of all individual respondents.

Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (individual responses only)	
Yes	27
No	960
Not stated	257
Total	1,244

Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 1,244 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 793 respondents (64%) were Catholic. One hundred and four respondents were from other Christian denominations while there were 51 from non-Christian religions. A further 164 respondents did not state their religion and 131 respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)	Person	Percent
Catholic	793	63.7
Other Christian:		
Anglican	38	3.1
Baptist	2	0.2
Lutheran	1	0.1
Orthodox	45	3.6
Pentecostal	2	0.2
Salvation Army	1	0.1
Uniting Church	5	0.4
Other Christian	10	0.8
Non Christian:		
Buddhism	5	0.4
Hinduism	3	0.2
Islam	27	2.2
Judaism	1	0.1
Other religion	16	1.3
No religion	131	10.5
Not stated	164	13.2
Total	1,244	100

For those who indicated that they were Catholic, a further question asked them to describe their participation in church activities. Their responses are shown in Table 7. A total of 419 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 156 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while 168 respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 50 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

Table 7: Religious description <i>(for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)</i>				
	Female	Male	Not stated	Total
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	224	127	68	419
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	140	9	7	156
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	90	1	9	100
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	56	2	10	68
Other	30	9	3	42
Not stated	6	1	1	8
Total	546	149	98	793

GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 207 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 5,891 individuals were represented through these groups. However, four 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 155 group submissions provided a group name, 52 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 Mount Carmel with around 1,000 members. There were also a number of other parish groups such as the Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong with 200 participants and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Varroville also with 200 members. There were 10 other groups with 100 members or more.

Table 8 : Group submissions from the diocese	
Name of group	Group size
Mount Carmel	1,000
Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong	200
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Varroville	200
Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes, Wollongong	150
St. Michael's Parish Nowra	150
Sts Peter & Paul Parish Kiama	140
Catholic Parish of Bowral and Mittagong	140
Social Justice Network The Christian Way Friends of ethical and moral science in all matters re. Church and State Governments' Population Policy	140
St. John's Dapto	120
St. Francis of Assisi Warrawong and St. Mary's Berkeley	115
Milton Ulladulla Sussex Inlet Parish	110
Immaculate Conception Parish in Unanderra	100
Catholic Education Office Wollongong	100
St Paul's Camden	90
Milton Catholic Parish Diocese of Wollongong	90
Immaculate Conception Parish Unanderra	87
St. Patrick's College Campbelltown	85
St. Benedict's Catholic College Oran Park	85
Edmund Rice College, Wollongong	80
Corpus Christi Catholic High School	80

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 30-49 years age group was the largest group represented with 1,292 members. This was followed by the group aged 50-69 years with 1,140 members. There was no age provided for around 1,473 group members.

Table 9: Estimates of ages of people in group submissions <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Under 20 years	503
20 - 29 years	880
30 - 49 years	1,292
50 - 69 years	1,140
70 and over	385
Unknown	1,473
Total	5,673

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

Of the total 5,778 group members whose sex was reported, 55 per cent (3,188) were female and 45 per cent (2,590) were male.

Table 10: Estimates of sex of people in group submissions <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Female	3,188
Male	2,590
Total	5,778

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



RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1

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

THEMES DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

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

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

- Love God, Love Neighbour (Chapter 4)
 - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God* (p. 29)
 - *Care for neighbour* (p. 36)
 - *Greater focus on Jesus Christ* (p. 30)
 - *Greater focus on the Word of God* (p. 31)
 - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching* (p. 32)
 - *Better faith formation* (p. 38)
 - *Renewed call to holiness* (p. 35)
- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
 - *Greater inclusion of all* (p. 108)
 - *Care for the environment* (p. 112)
 - *Fighting for human rights issues* (p. 110)
 - *Putting Gospel values in action* (p. 115)
 - *Ending discrimination of LGBTI* (p. 110)
- Sacraments (Chapter 6)
 - *Holy Orders – Ending celibacy / allowing priests to marry* (p. 66)
 - *Holy Orders - Ordination of women* (p. 69)
 - *Greater emphasis on prayer and sacraments* (p. 64)
- Leadership and Church Governance (Chapter 7)
 - *New model of Church, diocese, parish* (p. 93)
 - *Greater role for women* (p. 83)
 - *Greater involvement of the laity* (p. 84)
 - *New leadership and governance model* (p. 91)
 - *More formation and support for priests* (p. 89)

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

- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *Sharing the faith with others (p. 128)*
- *Listen to one another more (p. 136)*
- *Inclusion of the divorced and remarried (p. 46)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p.151)*
- *Modernise Church teachings (p. 169)*

SUBMISSIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

In keeping with these guidelines therefore, the submissions that follow are only from those individuals or groups who consented to having their submission being made public and being shared with their diocese. About 57 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.

God is asking His people to each go to their "inner room" and pray daily and to listen to each other

It seems the Spirit is leading us into contemplative prayer and we are to speak our truth and listen to each other.

There is more to being Catholic than going to Mass: people need to fully live their faith through not only the Mass (worship); but also through serving (ministry); participation (community); growing in faith (discipleship); and reaching out beyond the community (evangelisation).

Notwithstanding the importance of the Eucharist to the Mass, good preaching is also crucial. While priests may have adequate theological training, the way they preach needs support. Priests should have preaching training and resources available as well as mentoring. It seems to me that logical framing of the content, the manner it is delivered, use of technology and applicability to parishioners lives all needs improving.

My experience at Mass, in Ministry and in small groups is that men generally find it more difficult to speak about, and share stories about, their faith.

In terms of leadership, there aren't many men in our congregations yet we have a male senior leadership structure. There are many more women in the Church and do they have an appropriate voice at the highest levels?

The opportunity for Catholics to have outdoor Mass for weddings or special occasions. When a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, they should be able to have outdoor Mass as a choice. Many Churches have grounds that could easily accommodate an outdoor altar to these then and at other occasions that currently make many young Catholics choose civil ceremonies as the only alternative.

Given the size of most of our parishes, the value of property, money collections and numbers of parishioners, most of these parishes are "small businesses". To effectively manage these parishes, they should be well-organised and well-led (more business-like perhaps). The parish priest (is like a CEO) and should have a well formed and discerned Parish Council (similar to a Board) to set strategy and vision. There should be an effective parish Leadership Team to manage the day-to-day running of the parish in line with the vision set. This structure to be supported by well-formed, resourced and trained ministries. Good leadership is crucial!!!

Our attitude towards our Catholics who have been divorced and remarried needs to be changed. We have to love and forgive those who have broken marriages and welcome them fully into the life of the Church. The Gospel values of love, hope and forgiveness have to be paramount.

Our youth need more than just a youth group. They need to be offered roles in worship, ministry, community, discipleship, evangelisation and particularly, leadership.

In summary: • Current problems regarding priests not following the moral code are not new, simply more widely-exposed and being brought to civil law to be accounted. The Church hierarchy has attempted to cover and deny the problem for generations. Equally, a very docile laity and many clergy have chosen to blame their kids rather condemn those who perpetrated these vile acts. • For those of us from the Silent and Baby Boomer generations, our memories of a Catholic upbringing often are not times of enlightenment. We recall school Masses, regular benediction, a very dominant teaching style which was also practiced by some parents ... I have a leather strap collected from a Catholic school ... the style was punishment and an unforgiving Church rather than a loving Jesus who asked that we love one another as He loved us. • We are a much better educated people now and able to be both faithful and questioning ... not of truth, but of style and lack of empathy and homilies that are more wrathful than loving. Jesus and John the Baptist taught with a confronting style trying to liberate people from their lack of faith in God. Jesus also used parables, references to real life situations as a means of presenting a new Way of Life and taught that repentance is the only way to eternal life. Fear and brimstone were not His style. He loved His people and sought to engage them where they stood. • There is much hurt experienced by many of our generations and no sign of forgiveness, albeit the Holy Spirit does welcome many of us back. There is an urgent need for an ongoing conversation where clergy and Laity gain an understanding of each other, an acceptance that each has special God given talents and learned life skills. It is only when this conversation is a way of life that our understanding of God's Will and the pressures of life experience will be better understood. God is asking the people of His Church, particularly the hierarchy to engage its most valuable, yet least valued, asset and whole heartedly engage the Laity to collaborate with the clergy to bring people of our generation back to Our Lord Jesus and His Church, offering empathy for the guilt they have carried for so long. Once engaged

and reconciled and having a new born credibility within our Church have these saints carry out the other command of Jesus, to make Disciples, Baptise and Teach ... Perhaps it should be stated more succinctly as: search out those of the next two generations (X and Y ... our kids) who were born, baptised and educated as Catholics only to have found great doubt in the Church and its manner and its hierarchy and decided to leave the organisation, albeit retaining the essence of the faith in God and Our Lord Jesus. Then it will be their role to evangelise the next generation, (Z) and those who still do not see God in His Church.

Basically, to become more Christ-like in our dealings with others e.g. to act justly, to serve others. The gospels and New Testament say it all. In the end, it is to love God and to love one another.

God is calling us to do more for social justice. We attend Mass regularly, receive the sacraments, pray often and try to lead good lives. Yet we do not seek out those less fortunate. In our wealthy society today these should be no homeless, people with mental health issues going untreated, refugees struggling. Jesus healed the blind, the deaf, the demoniacs. We need to seek out these people in our society and help them lead the lives God wants them to lead.

Rejuvenate the reputation of the Church. Engage new people in the word of God by being a beacon of goodness in the world and putting into place genuine and robust reform to prevent any abuse of power. Ongoing pastoral care for the clergy. The clergy need support in all areas, including their own spiritual lives, as they carry a heavy workload and are often burdened. The clergy all need to tell of a loving God, one of mercy and kindness who loves each one of us—NOT the "fire and brimstone" God of condemnation who is sending us to Hell—the God that some clergy still preach of. The Church needs to engage in a meaningful way with the youth of this country and be much more relevant to everyday life. Using modern day tools such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, the internet etc. in an innovative way. Check out Fr Mike Schmitz from Ascension Presents (YouTube)—a younger priest who engages well with young people—university students, etc. answering meaningful questions they may have in a responsible and engaging way. The parish to be more invigorated to mission and evangelisation, and not just merely recipients of Mass and Liturgy. While this need not be prescriptive, each parish has people with lots of strengths that, when put together, can produce results such as Bible Study groups, Playgroups, Youth groups, Alpha courses, Pastoral Care, St. Vincent de Paul outreach, etc. The Church needs to be aware of the changing face of society and how to respond in a positive way. The way the Church responds to LGBTQI people, divorced people and even women who have had abortions is critical. Whilst the teaching of our Lord may be clear, every person has a story that only God may know and everyone needs to know that God walks with them and loves them every single day—no matter what and that God will help heal. We need to stop placing heavy burdens of judgement on people—as Jesus himself said ... Luke 6:37-38 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."—Surely, this is highly applicable for the Church as well.

The average age of regular church-goers is rising, within 15 to 20 years we will be too old to participate, there is an urgent need to change the Mass and the involvement of the laity to find a way to attract the younger generations. Change is intended as elevating the Laities involvement

and not displacing the priest whose complimentary role with the Laity is essential for the future, in fact the future is dependent on such an amalgamation of God-given Talents. A Mass especially for Youth to attend, celebrate, their Music, attend as altar server, readings, collection, welcome ... give the homily under guidance of the priest. Such a change is not an option but a precursor to returning the Church to its people from the abominable state it is currently in. Our response: God is seeking to have us all use our talents to return the lost generations to the Church and prepare it for the future where Church hierarchy are more in tune with the complementarity of the talents of priests and Laity.

To welcome ALL people, especially at Mass and primarily at Holy Communion. God invites all sinners to participate wholly at the table of the Lord. Let the children participate in all ways—reading, liturgical dance and mime, choir.

To be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. (I will be with you till the end of times) This can only be obtained by a life of prayer and frequent use of the sacraments. Through my scripture classes in the High school, I often came in contact with Pentecostals. They always showed a passion for their faith a passion which I don't always see in my Church. Someone once said to me, that we suffer of: "Performance orientated Catholics". Provided I do the right exercises God will love me. Naturally I don't want to judge others, but sometimes I would like to ask them: "Where is your passion for Jesus?" I have seen this passion in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The Pope calls it a grace for our time. But not only seen their passion but also the fruits of the Holy Spirit. As an example, the Missionaries of God's Love in [-] had to extend their buildings to house all the student priests. Also the MGL's brothers and sisters continue to receive more vocations. The Immaculata community of nuns in [-] doesn't receive that many vocations but their summer schools, which last a week, attract sometimes over 100 participants. There are also the covenant communities. Disciples of Jesus community has young people. The Youth Mission Team which goes into our schools to proclaim the gospel. The Emanuel Community in [-] has the NET Team which also ministered to our youth in the schools. The Charismatic Renewal seems to attract young people more readily than the average parish community. At a youth leaders' meeting in Sydney with Cardinal Pell, the question was asked, "How many there present have been in contact with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?" Nearly all of them put their hands up. So, where do we see the fruits of the Holy Spirit? Naturally this lively spirituality is not for everyone, but it should have a place in our parishes. However, as this kind of spirituality is mostly led by lay people, it is of utmost importance that the leader of such a group is a spirit-filled person. A person who is centred on Christ and has a prayer life. If we ask ourselves: "What is God saying to us?" I feel that we are not making good use of the gifts in our communities. We all have been given special gifts. It is for the parish priests to discern who in his parish has special gifts and to encourage and affirm those gifts in the community. So often, I get the impression that the priest in the parish has all the gifts. How often does the community suffer in silence if he hasn't got the gift of preaching? We all have been created uniquely by God and therefore we relate to God in our own unique way. There will never be another person like me. Our Church embraces all those different relationships / spiritualities, contemporary, reflective, charismatic, Marian, etc. Let us not say "You have to be like me". But all of us must make our relationship with Jesus the centre of our lives through prayer and the graces of the sacraments.

I feel God is asking us to listen to the people and to reach out to them at the most basic level. Society in Australia is increasingly atheist and the Church is seen as an organisation which is outdated and irrelevant. In the most basic of principles, God offers love, hope and a reason for being—and a life beyond this world. God is asking us, I believe, to preach this same message but in an entirely different way to get through to people in an incredibly self-absorbed, short term world.

As I see our Church as worldwide, my comments are not limited to Australia. Why didn't God hear the voices of the innocent children? Why are many of the clergy so aloof, is it a defence position for them? In Australia, why can't we Catholics fulfil our weekly obligation any day of the week? Why do we construct Church buildings that are never full a smaller building is more personal? How is the Churches mission in rural Australia? How are the collective we going to make the Church more invigorating for all? In my opinion, many Catholics' faith, both young and old, is not as strong as our clergy, and as a practicing Catholic of 73 years of age, other than Vatican II, it appears to have been the same old same old with fewer parishioners. As our mission in Australia, why don't we have a prayer service for disconnected Catholics one day a month where all matters are on the table and open to discussion?

The Church has been in the world for some 2000 years and has been growing and changing its structure during all of this time to meet the demands of the world as it too is always changing. These changing times have not and should not see the Church change its teachings based on the gospels and the traditions and history of the old testament but the changes rather have always tried to reflect the culture and times of each period in history and our Church should relate to these times especially in the way it communicates to all the members of the Church and the people living in the wider world. In past times, it was generally the clergy who were the educated elite, and in many instances, close to or aligned with the power of civil authority. In Australia today, of course this is very much no longer the case with Catholic Lay people being dominant in Government, Education, Welfare, Health and all manner of Commercial/Business Enterprise. This is also at a time when Catholic Lay people are highly educated not only in terms of secular education but also in Church degree courses. All of this, I believe God is calling out to us in Australia to review our relationship with each other and to recognise that before we can go further along the path (the most important part of that path being our mission to the world)) we need an urgent rebuilt of our governance standards within the Church that recognises the Laity has a major role in the governance of the Church and in many instances, is much more qualified to be the chief driver of Church Agencies than are members of religious orders. For too long, it has felt like that those called to ordained ministry see themselves as the true members of Church whilst the laity are simply the audience there to be led by the clergy. I know that most clergy would not consciously think this way or even believe that they might act that way but in many instances, nevertheless this appears to be the case from a laity viewpoint. This is not a healthy position for a relationship to be in so one of the issues to be addressed at the Plenary should be the role of the laity and the role of the ordained minister. There are many other matters of course that require addressing (moral leadership, social justice, working more effectively in the secular world, education, life issues such as our approach to gender and abortion, Church rituals, what is authentic prayer life, should we stop referring to people as lapsed or non-practicing Catholics and

simply recognising that that there are some five million baptised Catholics in Australia living in all shades of faith? The list is almost endless) Before we can successfully look at all of this in any meaningful way, we need first to develop a working understanding relationship in these times between ordained ministry and the laity. In other words, a more functioning governance model for the whole of the Church in Australia today.

The future of our Church is in danger as we have fewer and fewer priests. I have prayed about this and the spirit tells me we need to be more open to married priests and women priests, (in the past I rejected the idea of women as priests.). I think throughout the ages, there has always been paedophilia by the clergy and always hushed up. Having the above would go a long way to avoid it. I also would like to see our Masses more joyful and the Church doing more to attract and keep our youth. Most now who go to Catholic schools fall by the wayside in their teens as they don't see the Church as being relevant to modern living, I don't have the answer how to solve this, but we must try as a community. I see many sects whose halls are filled with the faithful and most are young, they must be doing something right. Also, life is more difficult today than ever before and the hierarchy should not tell people they must NOT use contraceptives, what is between a husband and a wife should remain their business, not the Church's. There is nothing in the Ten Commandments (which is the law laid down by GOD) that prohibits using them. I am a mother and grandmother of a very large family all brought up as Catholics and I see the struggles. The Church must modernise whilst keeping within GOD's law if it wants to survive, the hierarchy must not put their wants first and dictate, this has to be done peacefully and compassionately. I have found in the past that children being prepared for communion and confirmation are expected to turn up with parent/s at the worst time of the day, when parents return from work tired/are cooking dinner, children are irritable, babies need their bath, feed and bed, all of these make parents resentful of the priests/nuns/religious educators, which does not help the Church. Families are the foundation of society, good families should be respected by the Church and encouraged, not dictated to. Love and respect are mutual and should be practiced daily. May the Holy Spirit of GOD reign over the decisions to be made for the future of our Church and May we all be blessed with wisdom.

To continue our Catholic life with relevance to the age we live in, to encourage others to resume or become Catholic, and to pray for more candidates for priesthood to keep our Churches and parishes running.

To pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church to renew and restore us as the Body and Bride of Christ to our first love and zeal for Jesus, each other and evangelisation. We cannot give that which we do not have! It is a call back to holiness and truth. To be a people who do not bend and are not blown about by every wind of doctrine and whims of the world but are able to live, preach and share the Gospel with power and authority that comes from the Holy Spirit.

Overcome the apathy of Catholic laity. While many want to "have a say", few want to actually participate outside attending Mass.

How to improve the delivery of readings and homilies?

I think God is asking and guiding us to revisit our original faith parents and pull apart their faith journey from the beginning. Our Church has wandered too far away from our original faith

forefathers and mothers' teachings and examples in the name of progress. There have been a lot of good progress to benefit our Church and on the contrary, there has been a lot of activities, individual and collective behaviours which have severely tarnished and damaged and abused the Church. We now need to reassess collectively to give genuine honour, respect to our creator God and to one another. I think we as a Church have been too casual, blasé and complacent in our attitude towards our faith which we inherited. I am certain not every Catholic person would be guilty of this but I reckon the majority would. Let us look within us to find God and to emulate our saviour with sincere hearts body, mind and spirit. There is no need to use too many words all of the time, be silent and allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. (Look at the Indigenous people of planet earth they don't appear sophisticated in our western eyes but their spirituality far surpasses ours.) We have gone ahead with leaps and bounds and ran into a roundabout, oops. Where to now?? Indeed!

To move away from institutionalised worship and build the capacity of the community to work together to become people of mission—out on the streets, in our homes, in our workplaces. Living the Gospels through action and word.

I think that God is asking us to follow the teachings of Jesus more authentically. This means no discrimination of people based on their sexual preference. Also, the whole issue of sexuality and marriage needs to be cleaned up in the Church. People should not be judged or punished for getting divorced or marrying someone of the same sex. Priests and people in positions of responsibility in the Church need counselling and support to deal with their own prejudices and personal difficulties with marriage and sexuality. Priests of any kind should be allowed to marry if they wish. The issue of sin needs to be reviewed. The more accurate translation of sin from the Aramaic is "missing the mark". Children should not live in fear of sinning. They should be encouraged to reflect on encounters and choices that they have made and wonder how they could have done things differently. Students in high school who are noticing that their sexual preferences are same sex should not be made to feel dirty or sinful and they should not be told that they cannot attend Catholic schools. I want to make it very clear that I am fully heterosexual and unmarried but I believe that the moral judgements that the Church makes about sexuality is not only antithetical to any of the teachings of Christ but also gravely hypocritical given the findings of the Royal Commission and the widespread abuse of children by priests in the Catholic Church. I should also say that none of the behaviour that has occurred in the Church has rocked my faith, but I must stand up and speak for the principles and truth that Jesus spoke if I am a true Catholic.

Openness to all people. Christ founded a Church inclusive of everyone. Welcoming attitude needs to be promoted. Pastoral care of children/young people outside of Mass could encourage parents who feel unaccepted to come back.

Should the Church invest in young people? To identify and develop talents in music, leadership, youth ministry, pastoral care.

Please see annexed—Amended file.

To recognise that "... you have been appointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge." 1 John 20.
There needs to be a change in the Church towards a positive profile. Priest engagement and participation with the parish is very important but lacking. Priests need to be more approachable and make services inviting for parishioners to want to attend. Priests need to visit schools and form a relationship between the Church and school, to engage the younger generation into the faith. The Church rejecting the NO VOTE had a huge impact on the country. The Catholic Church needs to change. Priests need to be able to marry.
We need change in the Church. There needs to be a greater community between the Church and schools, not necessarily teaching but priests and especially the bishop. (The bishop has not been seen at the school). The inability of the Church to take responsibility for its downfall, due to its attitude to the behaviour of its priests. More live concerts to engage the younger generation.
To be inclusive. The survival of the Catholic Church depends on us remaining relevant to the people. Jesus said that we are neither 'Gentile nor Jew', yet the Church is not inclusive or tolerant and there is not equality for women. The Church needs to change people's perception; it can no longer remain a 'boys' club'. Women do the majority of the work keeping parishes running and working as catechists, but they are not able to hold positions of importance, like the priests is able to. The Pope speaks of inclusiveness and equality, but this is not represented in the way the Church is organised or run. These attributes don't often filter down to the bishops or clergy. Nepotism in the Catholic Church is rife. Women should be allowed to become priests or deacons. If the Church continues to be patriarchal, this attitude moves beyond the Church into wider society. The Church needs to reflect societies' movement towards gender equality. The Church needs to be inclusive of all Christians. The Church needs to be less rigid and more inclusive and community based. There needs to be less conservatism. Some priests are working to create change in their local communities and the world, but they are restricted by rhetoric. The Church in Australia nationally and locally needs to model a moral intolerance for poverty, domestic violence and oppression. We need to have a more visible focus on the poor. The Church has worked to create a connection with teenagers in relation to social justice outreach, but has created a disconnect due to historical Church abuses.
Impossible to know for sure but I believe he should be asking us to forgive him for allowing so much misery to be suffered by so many. Wars (especially based on religion), famines, insidious illnesses, innocent kids born with cancers and addictions, etc. etc. I know we are told this is our fault because of Adam and Eve but come on?? We are told God gave us the power to make our own decisions but just as easily he could have limited this power so it would not be used for evil? Where is this merciful God I've heard so much about? God being so creative could easily have endorsed and ensured Moses' message of "only one true God" being an enduring fact of life for all people for all time. Would have saved a lot of suffering the last 2000 years and for how long to come?
To be the face of Jesus in everything that we do.
To demonstrate strength, unity, leadership and most importantly remain faithful to God's truth. We must stand strong even if we are going against the prevailing culture. We must become laser-

focused on God, God, God always and above all things. In Australia, our love must be visible in the community. We cannot be insular. See John 13:35. We will be known as disciples if we love one another. We must constantly be loving our Catholic and non-Catholic neighbours whilst being more vocal and proactive when there are disasters affecting communities (e.g. drought, domestic violence, elder abuse)

What is God asking of us at this time? To trust in God's Holy Spirit to guide ourselves and our Catholic Church forward into the future. God is also calling us to Deep Prayer. God expects us to stand firm in our Catholic Faith and with His Catholic Church. We don't desert a friend in time of trouble, so we too must stand by our Catholic Church during this horrific period.

To forgive those couples who seek Assisted Reproductive Technology. These couples have prayed to God for the blessing of a child. When God hasn't heard their call, they have used the medical advances of our time to help them conceive their babies. The marital act of sex may not be imminent, but this does not mean that they are not having loving intercourse, it just means that their love has not implanted in the womb. Therefore, using a husband's sperm to meet a wife's egg is not the worst possible thing a couple could do, whether that is through IUI, IVF, ICSI, etc. Please consider reviewing the restrictions for married infertile couples.

I think God is asking us to unite as a human race, to love each other for our likenesses and differences and to take action to bring love, freedom and peace to the world. Being distinctively Christian means carrying to the cross with Jesus and being people of action. We need to strip back the damage the "Church" and its leaders have done in coming between adherents' faith and their love of God and their desire to lead a spiritual life. The "Church" needs to simplify what it means to be an active Christian so that people feel they can give of themselves while meeting the demands of modern life. Let's look at the case of your Catholic school teachers who spend more than 60 hours a week working to serve their class. Most have families and other responsibilities to tend to. And on top of this, many temporary school teachers are required to jump through hoops to keep their jobs from year to year. They are pushed into studying a Graduate Certificate in Theology requiring 600hrs of study and \$6000 debt to get a job in your system. Much of this study is useless in teaching primary school students. There are many genuine people and teachers, who are "turned off," or "turn off" because of the internal system/bureaucracy created by the "Church" and education system. People are leading secular lives for a reason. It is because they have a choice and they are choosing to exercise it. They are saying they are no longer interested in an outdated system that has allowed abuse of our children. Turning this predicament around may be exactly what God is asking of us today.

We are being asked to look openly at our world TODAY, as we were urged to do in Vatican II documents, and make the changes in our Church that are urgently need in this modern era. We must trust that the Holy Spirit will be guiding us today just as it has been doing throughout all ages. This is 2018, Australia, and we need to be discerning where Jesus would be leading us TODAY, with His message of love, compassion and inclusive service.

That our situation in Australia is perilous right now. We are failing miserably at passing on the faith. We need to revive family catechetics and equip and enthuse parents with the skills to do this. Pastors should begin this revival. We should send volunteer catechists into the Catholic

schools to teach the faith. Schools have and are failing us miserably. Better still, remove the name Catholic from the schools, most are not Catholic, and are receiving money under false pretences. Trinity and Christ-centred spirituality essential. The sense of the sacred in Church. Confession vital for the Church whose mission is sacramental repentance and sanctification. Marriages must not thwart the conception of children destined to be saints. Stop ignoring the twofold purpose of matrimony.
*Include the youth in relevant activities/liturgy. *Acceptance of all—the Church can't say certain groups e.g. homosexuals are wrong. *Allow women priests. *Allow priests to marry.
To see Jesus in everyone we meet. To recognise Jesus as "the least of my brethren". Be the face of Christ to all we meet. Care and respect for one another especially the most vulnerable. Be aware that Jesus was born in a homeless situation and became a refugee.
Above all, we need to ask God for wisdom a hearing ear and a hearing heart. Wisdom will protect our children so it is vital that we teach the young about wisdom. It's time our young study "The Book of PROVERBS" to gain KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING, it will keep their path straight. With Australia legalizing same sex marriage, we must teach our children that God's plan for marriage is between a Man and a Woman. Making same sex marriage legal in this country does not make it correct. When something is legalized, it will be taught in schools, and the worst thing that could happen is we would have a generation of Men and Woman who will lose their identity. We will have boys who do not know how to be a Man, and we will have a girl who does not know how to be a Woman. Some children will miss out on having both a Father and Mother. There will be a rise in Sexual Transmitted Deceases in the future due to the government legalizing same sex marriage. It is because we love them that we must tell our brothers and sisters what is the truth even if the government legalize it. The Church is not perfect because we are all sinners but the Church should not be afraid of fighting for what is right and should not be ashamed of being criticized. Conclusion: Teach our children wisdom to keep their path straight and keep them safe. Protect the image of God that is Man (He Male and She Female in a loving relationship) for that image is love and God is Love.
I don't believe in God; therefore, have no opinion on what God wants.
To welcome everybody no matter their race, background, size, etc. To be a neighbour to others and treat everybody the way that you want to be treated.
God is asking us to take care of the world he created for us, to deepen our beliefs as Catholics, and to always push forward by helping in all ways possible. He also wants us to really look at our environment and see the destruction we have created, but looking at it won't help he wants us to really dig deep and find solutions to keep the environment clean and safe for humans and animals.
—To share—have peace—be a community —to help—to love—be compassionate.
I think God is asking for all of us to respect all of us (Australians), to simply respect one another and respect ourselves and to respect our surroundings.
God is asking for kindness and being caring towards our peers, wild life and environment.

To be sustainable with our environment, to be kind to one another, love everyone around you, and not judge each other based on their appearance.
To be good people, To believe in Him, Help the less fortunate
God is asking us at this time to be happy, and loving, and have peace, and accept everyone.
I believe he is asking us to believe in Him, be open towards others, show compassion and hospitality towards others, show empathy towards others, pray, give to the poor and those in need, give to charity, show kindness towards others and be humble.
Throughout my perspective, I believe God may be asking us the individuals of Australia to appreciate one another, value the diversity our country is blessed with and to spread awareness about global issues through and to the Catholic Church. He as well, may be wanting us to respect our environment and help our neighbours, either local or internationally, to help the people in need or pain.
—To be more accepting of all people. —To understand further what peoples diverse needs are. —To be closer with God regarding our actions.
I don't believe in God. But I follow in Buddhism and believe us all as humans need to learn to respect each other and the nature around us.
I believe God is asking us to—Help each other succeed and achieve. —Have hope and belief in ourselves as well as others. —Accept one another for their difference.
God is asking us to:—Help one another. —[Be at] peace with each other. —Accept different cultures and races.
I don't believe God is telling us anything but if he was it would be to respect people from different faiths and races and sexuality, and make sure everyone is looked after.
To be nice to accept people for whom they are even if their culture is different, colour, race, age, sexuality.
God is asking Australia to not only live out the commandments and beatitudes in their everyday lives (such as caring, kindness, compassion.), but ACT on current issues within the nation. This includes homelessness, refugee crisis, treatment of Aboriginals and global warming. As our society begins to move beyond the inequalities of the past, God is asking Australians to support this movement by treating women with respect and equal to men, accepting all races, genders, ethnicities and beliefs as well as tackling current issues of Sustainability within school and the wider community. Addressing these issues at school and raising awareness is key in order to produce a happy, healthy country.
To be thankful that there is no conflict and war in this country. To look after the less fortunate.
To be grateful for the country we live in. To help others that are in need, take only what we need.
Getting rid of waste. Be kind to humans/ animals. Get rid of pollution.

—To help the people in need e.g. farmers in drought. —Take only what we need. —To be grateful for the country we live in. —Look after the less fortunate.
God is asking us to be kind, loving and understanding, look after the earth. Continue the Catholic/Christian faith at school. Take care of the less fortunate. Be accepting.
To take a stand for our faith. He's constantly hoping we all turn to Him and take up our cross daily. We need to help Israel.
—More community involvement. —Helping all. —Being kinder.
For everyone to get along.
To be welcoming to any new people that may come into our borders and to also find peace within ourselves and help others to find it too.
To be more connected to others and God, to be kinder the each other, to try and make peace [in] the world.
To help the less fortunate, be kind to others and continue the Catholic faith.
To love one another, to always show compassion towards the people and animals of Australia.
*That we live in a Catholic way and we support each other always *God wants us to be the very best people that we can be *to look out for everyone and to respect and love each other *don't be scared to speak up and share our opinion
- Love and compassion for all (particularly in reference to the current refugee crisis)
He is asking for us to live a safe life full of happiness, love, respect, loyalty and peace. We are privileged in Australia and we shouldn't take that for granted, we still need to live life according to God's values.
I am not a believer in God although since birth, I have been brought up in Catholic schools. Personally, from a bit of an outsider's point of view, the Catholic teachings ask us to forgive one another, and be kind and caring. God wants to you to live a life of generic everyday values, free of negative energy or "sin".
I strongly feel God is asking us to have the Eucharistic Adoration increased, no communion in the hand, a plate held under so the Eucharist can't fall on the ground, a kneeler option for communion, Saint Michael's prayer said after Mass at least on Sunday, more preaching on hell and purgatory, for priests to face the tabernacle during the consecration, a deeper love for our Mother Mary, the tabernacle to be placed in the centre, not on the side, return of beautiful vestments that bring awe and praise to God, dress code of modesty, increase in times and days for confessions, churches to be open on school pick up so parents can take their children to visit Jesus after school, and have more traditional Masses available.
Firstly, I would like to say I am a Catholic but not practicing at this stage, but I feel that God isn't asking us to be better Catholics; he is asking all Australians to be better people not just in everyday activities but better to each other and saying this, I don't mean more tolerant to things we disagree with. I feel very strongly that God still wants us to think for ourselves and make

decisions that we feel are the right ones. It's ok to not like something you don't agree with. Political correctness, I feel, is a major problem, with most people afraid to speak their mind as to not offend anybody. God gave us a fantastic mind and would be happier for all people to express their sentiments, good or bad.
» What is our opinion on the Catholic Church? » If changes were made, would more Australians go to Church? » Why are there less Australians going to Church now?
For younger generations to attend more Masses and learn more about religion.
—To be kind and respectful of one another. —To be thankful for everything in our lives. —Live in a peaceful community.
I think that God asking us to think about the future of the Church and where is it leading to. I think that he wants us to think about one another and how we can become more aware of our connection with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
To gain peace within our country and with the rest of the world.
—To spread love and peace. —Make peace with others, conflict recently. —Bring out the best in each other. —Have faith in one another. —Cherish our moments and memories with each other.
—How much do we go to Church on a weekly basis. —How our connection with God helps us to be better people. —Why is our faith important to others in the Church?
For peace and to care for each other. Also, to stop terrorism.
God is asking us to be thankful and to spread peace in our neighbourhoods. To go to church regularly and to practise worship.
To follow his ways and to live by peace and harmony. I also think that he is asking for us to treat each other like we would like to be treated, by loving our neighbours.
God is asking us to find new ways to engage all of the Australian community. He wishes for us to set an example for the rest of the world and change some of the views on the Catholic Church today.
—To help others in need. —Continue to grow and learn from each other. —Respect. —Peace. —Help each other through world problems / disasters.
I don't know, I don't follow God.
—To accept and value everyone and their opinions. —To follow the Catholic faith. —To believe in God and the Church.
I think God is asking us to try our best to do the right thing by all people and aim to be the best people we can be. He is encouraging us to strive together to create a better society for ourselves to unite together as one. Sometimes, I think God asks too much of us.
—To follow in his footsteps by showing kindness and love to those around us. —Look after one another. —To be the best person you can be. —Make peace in our world. —Be more engaged in to the Church.

He is asking us to be more engaged within the Church and to make a stand against world issues. He is also asking us to share his stories with other people so more people come actively engaged within the Church and Catholic community.
—To be humble and honest towards friends and family. —Share love between those who love you. —Be faithful towards God and environment God created. —The Church is losing hope in reaching out to youths of Australia.
—To be thoughtful and respectful of others. —To be aware and practice our faith. —To support each other. —To aim for peace.
—To be faithful. —Be the best person you can be. —Be more engaged in the Catholic Church. —Accept people for who they are. —To believe in yourself.
God is asking the community to have faith and to come to Mass so that the Church is still going to be standing. HE needs the youth because we are the future of the Church and without us attending and practicing, there will be no Church.
To be as one united faith and to spread God's word around Australia. To make peace and be compassionate
—Peace—forgive others sins —follow in Gods footsteps —try our hardest in everything we do
I believe God is asking us to unite as a country to improve the way of the Catholic Church do younger citizens gather more of an interest in Church. I believe he is always asking to show love and compassion amongst one another.
—Become closer to the Church again—make the Church more relevant to our lives—give more to others
—Try to help those who are less fortunate than us—care for each other—attend church and listen to the stories of Jesus—ask for forgiveness of sin—peace
—To care for those who are struggling around the world. —To have a strong bond with God. —Follow in his footsteps and forgive those who have done wrong. —Treat everyone equally.
God has always chosen to ask of all Australians to try and follow his footsteps and choose to do good. Good can be guided through the golden rule and 10 commandments. At this time in Australia, I believe God is wanting more people to join the Catholic Church and start to have deeper understanding of what the Catholic community is trying to convey.
I don't believe in God but if I did, I don't think he would care. But if he did: equality; justice; love; peace; greater interest in the Catholic Church.
God thinks the Church is dying and wants us to fix it, he thinks we are losing faith, he thinks we need to work together to rebuild the Catholic Church in Australia.
I think God is asking us to be more compassionate to others. I also think that he is asking us to be better stewards of the environment.

To have peace, engage in religion, come together, love one another as he has done the same to us and follow Jesus' teachings.
God is asking us to create a united community/nation through "loving thy neighbour" and leaving judgement for Him. He is also asking that we focus on injustices plaguing our modern society, not to ignore them.
For us to make a peaceful community and live through God's morals.
Be accepting, forgiving, caring.
I think that God is asking us to look after both each other and our environment better. Treat our refugees with respect and like fellow humans. Be more accepting of difference within our communities e.g. LGBTQI+. Stop damaging our planet. Stop deforestation, using so much coal and non-renewable resources and make the government pressure/punish large companies who are harming the earth and other citizens for profit.
—To follow in his footsteps. —To reflect on his journey. —To better our world. —To become involved with our Church community.
To unite as one to help fix the issues and problems of our country, making it a better place for all.
—To become a part of our local community and use your time and effort to help those that need it most. —Assist within and outside your church. —Be the best version of yourself that you can be.
We have been told that he wants us to accept others for who they are.
I think God is asking us to find strength find our voices and share our opinions. To have an open mind and open heart, to listen to all and allow new perspective and create new understandings, ideas and questions as a community.
To follow in his light and actions to make Australia a better place. By recognising and acknowledging current issues thinking what God would do and making action towards resolution.
—Peace. —Unity. —To assist others (e.g. other countries, the farmers in Aus., etc.).
Preach, teach, respect, love, live, faithful, listen, reflect, praise, learn, peace, follow, gratitude.
I don't believe in God.
To support farmers who are struggling with droughts, be helpful and caring, eliminate injustice.
To be able to live a free and happy life with family and friends doing the things you love and enjoy. Go to Church and follow in God's footsteps. Love and respect each other. Everyone is able to go to school and get a good education.
—To be kind and compassionate to everyone we meet and to not wrongfully judge others. —Show respect to all those who deserve it.
I'm not Catholic, I don't know what 'God' wants of us truthfully, I don't think anyone can, they can only make assumptions based off scriptures. Society, as a whole, needs equality and justice but religion in my eyes is a catalyst to creating judgement and seclusion. Religion creates an avenue for categories and bias based on teachings, almost a right to not accept based on religious beliefs.

To carry on the Catholic faith but also save the planet and our country before the damage is irreversible.
I believe God is asking of us to be peace makers, to love and be happy as we treat people fairly with equality. I believe God wants us all to be happy, showing respect and gratitude to those who deserve it, whilst also forgiving those who may need to earn this.
I think God is asking us to accept one another for who we are and to not judge a book by its cover, to love one another as God has loved us and to spread the good word of the Lord and spread the teachings and miracles of God himself.
Love one another, be at peace, spread God's teaching.
—To work together (drought, government). —Save our environment. —Get rid of injustice. —Recognise that we all bleed and hurt the same.
To be more helpful to the countries around the Globe. Priority to the religious aspect of life. Increase faith in God. Accepting people regardless of their race and bullying free Australia. Praying more and depending more on God.
I don't know. Maybe to live a peaceful life and to believe in him.
To be kind.
At this time, I think God is asking for us to be more proactive, compassionate and peaceful.
To be nice to people.
To protect and conserve our earth and God's beautiful creation.
—He is asking us to be good and to look after our land. —To remain faithful.
To be kind and to love each other.
God is asking us to take care of our land and nation, as well as helping people in need.
To follow in Jesus' footsteps, to love another as God has loved us, be humble, reflect on our lives.
To respect Him and others, and to love one another, and live out the commandments the best I can.
To respect him and others, and to love him.
God is asking Australia to be kind and to stop terrorism and create peace around the world.
—Be compassionate—help those in need—supportive—be evangelists.
To be the best of ourselves.
God is asking us to be kind to each other, have peace with everyone, and to love one another.
I think God is asking that we all unite to improve and find solutions to our frequent problems we experience as a country (e.g. droughts, bushfires, floods, farming issues, etc.) Not necessarily through Church or religion but through love and compassion as we do not have much of that in our world today.

To respect, to love and to care about the people around us. Also, to never take anything for granted because you might never get it again.
—Care for people in need. —To live in peace with everybody around us. —Put others before yourself.
I'm atheist.
To be aware of my impact on the planet. To be kind to everyone. To be open-minded to everyone. To remain strong through hard times. Stay faithful in times of influence through social networking.
To be good people and help the community; local, national, and global.
Peace and compassion.
—To be Grateful. —To be respectful. —Stand up and Spread the word or share beliefs. —To live faithfully through God. —Follow in the footsteps of God. —Live by God's commandment and beatitudes.
If the Catholic God is real, I believe that he would be asking of the following: —Faith—Hospitality—Stewardship—Compassion—To reflect the teachings of Jesus—To let go of prejudice against races, genders, sexuality, etc. —Empathy—Love.
(I am atheist, but I was raised by a Catholic family, and think Christianity still has many great morals and messages)—To be considerate and generous towards the people that are not fortunate enough to have been born in a country like Australia where we don't go hungry.
To follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and live out his values, virtues, commandments and beatitudes.
—To pray for others and keep those less fortunate in our thoughts. —To love each other. —To be grateful and thankful. —To follow in Jesus' footsteps and live out his values. —To create peace. —To stay faithful. —To be accepting.
The Holy Spirit is seeking to inspire us to meaningful conversations to expose the hurt and isolation carried by many people in our Church recognising we are all part of the Body of Christ. With His guidance we will work together, priests and Laity, to listen to the people who are seeking an explanation, seeking solace, seeking a reason to return to God through a recognition of Jesus who still walks with us in our lives. Through prayer and listening to each other, we can invite those lost souls back to a community in which Jesus is Our Lord and our solace.
That we should voice our opinions, more because they can go unheard.
I think that God is asking of us in Australia to care more for creation and not to pollute it.
Go to Church or pray at least once a month or once every two months, less time judging people, more time loving life and each other.
God is asking us to be kind to one another and by being inclusive.
That we keep the Catholic Church growing and alive.

I think God is asking us to follow in the ways God taught Jesus, to be kind to one another and to love your neighbour. I also think he wants us to be grateful for what we have and to always have common good in our heart.
Pray for others, treat creation with respect, give to the poor.
The gospels make it very clear. Go and preach the gospel. Nowhere does it say to organise a plenary council. Go to history and see St Francis, St Dominic and St Ignatius preached the gospel with a lot of footwork, gathering similar-minded people around them.
I feel he wants us to try and bring the youth back into our churches. I believe the Church needs to support the Gay community and recognise their relationships. I also think God wants us to consider married priests in our communities and parishes.
I think he is asking us to spread the word of God and the Catholic Church and to be kind to one another.
Educate the members of the Church about their faith so they are equipped to share with others.
To find out why people are not going to Church. I think a confidential survey of as many people as possible would be a good start. This could be of the parents of students attending Catholic schools. What would change for you to return to the Church? I feel the Mass needs to change to modernise. There needs to be different versions such as shorter. It is difficult for parents of children with disabilities attending regular Mass. Do we need the first readings are they still relevant? The homily should be short. The language should be modernised. The latest version does not work and the sheet produced is so difficult to follow especially if you have not attended for a while. I would like to see a booklet produced in simple for and showing when to stand, sit, kneel, etc.
God is asking us to be patient, tolerant, accepting of each other and sensitive to the needs of the poor and marginalised as well as open and committed to social justice issues. He asks us to listen closely to the words of Scripture and to live as closely as possible to His teachings. Catholics, especially the young and those new to the faith, need to be aware of the Church's teaching – e.g. in areas of being in the state of grace to receive communion; regular confession, etc.
God is asking us to make changes to cope with a decreasing number of clergy and congregation size. Perhaps, this will mean fewer Mass times during the week; greater involvement of the laity, for example, in delivering Holy Communion; being more inclusive of people, for example those who are divorced or belong to different Christian faiths; removing barriers/restrictions for priests, for example marriage and family; increasing the role of women in the Church; and focusing on the Church of tomorrow, that is, families and youth.
Peace and acceptance. Swinging open the doors of Catholicism to welcome all.
That we lovingly share the good news of the Goddess (St Mary) as the universal spirit that binds the universe and all people together ...
I believe that God is asking of us in Australia at this time to show love and compassion to those less fortunate than ourselves.

I believe that God is asking us to be more repentant and considerate for the farmers, in who have struggled to overcome the consequences regarding the drought. He is asking us to show more compassion and be more considerate for these issues, as well as balancing our family, school and social life to Gods viewpoint.
Follow the Bible. Be kind. Love your neighbours and yourself. Show compassion. Help others in need. Work together to achieve goals.
Well, me being a teenager, I'm still working, I'm still working out for myself whether or not I believe in God, and all about faith. Either way, I think if there is a God, He would definitely want us to keep moving forward. To strive to beat poverty, global warming and cancer, to find equality in our society, and I think the Catholic Church should have more of an influence in the change.
* To reach out to the less fortunate (developing countries, hospitals, jails). * To volunteer our time to those who need it more. *To sacrifice (for charities or neighbours). *To spread our opinions and God's word. *To be kind and thoughtful towards our neighbours. * To strive and do our best. * To live as the best version of ourselves. *To keep learning. *To be a peacemaker.
To carry out the education of everyone on the word, teachings and morals from God. To focus on giving education to everyone and child around Australia, no matter their age, economical status, social status or their ethnicity.
—Help others in need. —Be a supportive member of the community. —Apply God's teachings into everyday life/scenarios. —Fight social justice issues. —Take care of the environment and animals.
God is asking Australia to spread awareness and advertise the word of God. Australia might be struggling to find faithful followers and priests—and God asks that we continue to find a path, purpose and relevance for the Catholic community to continue on the path of social justice.
—To connect with each other and live happily with God's influence.
—Faith —Peace—Hope—Reverence —Looking after the environment —Showing leadership (being leaders for the younger generation).
—Loyalty—Commitment—Leadership—Faith—Peace among his people—Respect—Taking Responsibility.
I think God is asking us to be a more inclusive Church. One in which women and young adults are included in decision-making processes; are asked for opinions in matters relating to everyday living. There are people with skills, expertise, education and eagerness to be involved in Church that would relieve priests of many of the onerous tasks in which they are presently involved. I would like to see seminary training become more "down to earth". They need to have 'the smell of the sheep'. More assistance needs to be given to priests from other countries so that they understand the culture of the Australian Church. I think there is a place for the 2nd Rite of Reconciliation.
Speak to the people in the language of our time. Clericalism has created a huge gulf between the average church-going Catholic and the priests, bishops and other religious specialists of or Church.

E.g. the changes to the Mass (back to the council of Trent) was rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.
That we be open and pray for people and communities that are dealing with the droughts or wildfires and we help our community when it is needed.
I believe God is asking for us to be our best selves, and to get involved with every opportunity. God wants us to stay healthy and feeling great and give our best in our education here at [-].
God in Australia is asking that we accept everybody no matter their differences. He wants us to take care of everyone and everything such as our local community and environment. Lastly, God is asking that we reflect our feeling onto him so he can be a listener and provide for us.
It's not my problem. Even though everyone does it, "God" doesn't want us to be stupid or make stupid decisions but everyone does something stupid every day.
I think that God is asking for the Church to be involved in every aspect of our world. God is asking for ministry, especially youth ministry. As well as more parish involvement in school and youth work. I think He is most definitely asking for a united Church bound together by our faith and united by the Spirit. He is asking us to preach and share with one another.
God is asking us to help those who are in need and/or suffering and that include the ones living in our own country and those who aren't. God is also asking us to believe in him and have faith.
—Peace; Within the world, small communities and within his people. —Love; Between people—Acceptance and understanding. —Unity within the Australian community; through politics and people. —Compassion and care. —Equality; Within people, Education, Love, Gender and the Environment.
I believe God is asking us to be kind to one another, treat everyone with respect, pray, help others in times of need, do good in the world, come together as one, care for creation and the environment and most importantly, care for those who are less fortunate.
—To listen to each other. —To pray for one another. —To join in prayer. —To believe in God and do good. —To help the farmers in the drought. —To care for the creation we have been gifted with. —Care for others in our community.
To believe and do good. To follow his word and help those in need. To not sin or lead ourselves or others astray.
I think that God is asking us to change to better represent the society we live in, by reforming the role of women in the Church to allow for a more balanced structure at all levels. I also think that God is asking us to move with society, and instead of desiring for the Church to stay as it is or move back to a more traditional form, to ask the question, what do people need from us now? And to adjust practices, attitudes and rules that prevent the Church from connecting with the people who it wants to keep connected with the Church. Additionally, due to the lack of priests in Australia and the fact that priesthood is clearly not a desirable path for most men to follow, I think God might be asking us to begin to consider a Church beyond the 'single, celibate men' priesthood. I think many men and women who would represent the Catholic Church and share the word of God beautifully are not able to do so due to their gender or simple and natural desires to

love another person or have a family. I understand that such changes run counter to many of the principles of the Church but in Australia, we have the privilege of living in a society that is largely progressive and accepting of change. I believe that our Church within Australia therefore is uniquely placed to consider new ways of functioning and of those ways being successfully implemented and supported by Catholics and the wider community.

To be more inclusive all of people, to actually get out into the community and love one another, to be more visibly involved in volunteer/charity work—as well as making these organisations accessible. To stop Catholicism being the easy target and swept to the side by politicians, or its message being misconstrued to suit their agendas.

God has given us a message and I find that people are using it out of context and using it to deliberately destroy and vandalise the true word that God has left for us in his absence. I highly believe that God is asking us to stop being so cruel and selfish in our ways and to do everything that is possible to show others what God is really saying. The world is as full of evil as it is good and I have accepted that our world will never be fully peaceful but I think that if we at least start to make a change and show others what Catholics really mean and intend for everyone than we will absolutely have a real chance at blessing the younger generation with the knowledge of Christ and then our Church will not be stifled and silenced in the ever changing and sinful world.

As a Catholic from birth, I truly believe that God is asking us to stop living in the past and to return to the essence of Christ's message—love of God and love of neighbour. This has been buried under successive layers of dogma and man-made rules, so that now we seem to have a Church which is heavy on ritual, archaic language, men in flowing robes, inequality for women and a stagnant interpretation of scripture. This has become irrelevant to our children and, as I get older, I am seeing this too. Christ's movement was a grass-roots movement, where people were asked to throw off the intricate rules and regulations which had emerged over the centuries and return to the best way to live one's life—by acknowledging our relationship with God and using that as our way of relating to others. Now we have returned to the rules and regulations, many man-made, which have kept our Church in the past. One of the most encouraging verses from the Gospels is John 10:10 "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full". If I relate that to my worship, if it's not life-giving, why would I want to spend time on it? Our Churches are partially filled with aging parishioners, who are very loyal and who have grown up under a burden of guilt. Therefore, they stay. Many of our youth get very little from the ritual and interpretation of scripture which is on offer and, if they attend, they just sit there for an hour. What is the point of that? Many clergy just put a guilt trip on parishioners saying, virtually "They should be here", but I think the Spirit is saying "Christ was a man of his time and he intended his message to grow with the times, not remain static." I don't believe that the next generation will return to the Church as it is today. Pope John XXIII wanted the Church to open the windows and let in the light of modernity and thought. Unfortunately the windows were closed again and we have a situation where parishioners are intelligent, thinking people who are expected to accept a Church which is mired in the past and has the priest as the fount of knowledge. I know this is not the case everywhere, but it is what my family have experienced. Something has to be done about ministering to the people. I don't believe there is a good case for male, celibate priests, when other denominations employ a minister who is paid a wage just like everyone else and who is

accountable to the parish. I have seen a female Uniting Minister in this situation, whose husband had his own job, so there is no financial burden on the parish. She was so organised, efficient and gave the best homily based on a progressive interpretation of the scripture as part of a funeral service. It was so life-giving to be there. Her faith and willingness to minister to her people were very encouraging. I wonder if some of the things we are told were 'instituted by Christ', actually were instituted in this way in Christ's mind? I think empty Churches are a hint from the Spirit.

1) The primacy of love in all aspects of the Church's life and mission, which means treating all people with respect as real human beings within the reality of each one's particular circumstances. 2) Equality for men and women in the Church. The sole authority of the parish priest given in canon law is killing our parishes. Laity must have real responsibility. 3) The Church's mission is to communicate Christ and his message to the world, yet we have a male dominated communication and people are not listening because it lacks the feminine balance. How differently the matter of sexual abuse would have been handled if women had shared positions of real responsibility in the Church. It is imperative to open the door for priestly ordination for women. Stop pretending this is a theological question. At heart, it is about a long outdated perception that power belongs to men, and in the Church, only to ordained men. 4) Marriage. Enormous contradictions in the Church's laws about marriage, divorce and annulments. Read with the heart John 4: 1-42. Christ did not suggest, ask or demand the women get annulments for her previous five marriages or leave the man she was currently with. He waited for her. He came to her and she ran off and became his witness, so much so others sought out Jesus on the strength of her story and came to believe in Jesus. How unlike Jesus to deprive divorcees of Holy Communion and tell people they were never married when they give an annulment. It is in so many cases this latter is utter nonsense and only confuses people who have already been traumatised by the breakdown of their marriage. 5) There is no accountability from bishops when priests, appointed them, (as the bishop's representatives we are told at PP installations,) do as much damage as causing 60 percent—no exaggeration, this has been recently factually correct in my parish. So many people hurt, a parish divided, the priest is moved on and no attempt is made to apologise to the parish by the bishop or to address the hurt and damage. In a business structure this would not be tolerated. 6) The Catholic Education System is not handing on the faith. Look at the reality: so many parents do get involved in the parish community which runs the local primary school and we see only a few of them at Mass.

—To be good citizens and to act like Jesus wanted us to. —Allow refugees to settle in Australia.

—To come together and listen/have talk sessions and to see what changes need to happen within the Church. —To be kind and respectful to ourselves and others. —To be humble and compassionate.

—To live out the gospels in everyday life. —Share the word of God. —Show love and compassion to everyone in society. —Fight for what is right. —Look after the environment around us.

To be compassionate and understanding of each other's opinions and beliefs. Also, to be grateful for the life we are given and to enjoy it.

To stand up for what we believe in and in what God is telling us to do. To not remain oppressed or scared to speak out when our opinion goes against the mainstream view. To also place a larger

emphasis on Jesus and his teachings as the heart of his teachings need to be re-emphasised within Australian society, as there are many misconceptions about the Catholic faith and Jesus' teachings.
To follow your own path and be kind.
To listen to each other, to share ideas, to be kind and loving.
—Peace in the nation—no discrimination—equality—love -acceptance of others.
To love one another.
To help one another through hardships. Help those that are suffering and respect and love one another.
—To go to church. —To give to those in need. —To forgive people that have wronged us. —To overcome challenges. —To break down barriers.
To love one another, to treat others with respect and love, and to not judge others for their beliefs.
I'm not religious so I actually don't have an opinion on what I don't believe in but since I do religion at school, probably love and peace.
—Being nice to people/no judgment. —Not pushing faith onto people. —Helping homeless people, people in poverty. —Stopping racism, sexism, homophobia.
—To help others. —To love our neighbours. —To go to church.
God is asking us to re-evaluate ourselves and for us to care and love for the environment and other people around us.
How can we know what God who may not exist is asking us? How can we assume such things?
To promote peace amongst ourselves, to spread compassion and love. To make a good example and influence to other countries around the globe.
To care for ourselves and our neighbours, to look after the environment, help people in need, to ACCEPT everyone as who they are, NOT who you want them to be.
—To recognise social injustices against people such as asylum seekers, the less fortunate, and to give help. —To keep an open mind about the choice of faith by others. To allow their practice without any preconceived ideas. —To promote peace and to not let the anger and bias of other nations to impact on us. —To turn our attention to the protection of the environment and global warming.
To be the best person we as Australians can be.
To be more accepting of others regardless of past traditions and beliefs as we, as a society, moves to become more progressive.
—I think God is asking us to promote peace and acceptance of each other and of religion/spirituality/non-religion. —There is a need from not only God but society to not be boxed

in by traditions but to move and flow with the dynamic nature and changes of humanity. —To make less of a prejudice around religion, it is not something to fear or be ashamed about!
God wants us to ask for his forgiveness. He asks us to open our hearts so that we may have faith in God. Our relationship with God needs to strengthen.
Increase active participation in spirituality.
To accept LGBTQI people and recognise gay marriage because love is love and it's not up to the Church or anyone to judge. Accept Women as priests.
Smaller Mass sizes and length of Mass, form youth Masses with like 20 children or teenagers and make it go for 20-30mins, same with elderly people.
To help and contribute to the community to help build a cooperative society.
To be a good person who contributes to their community.
To speak openly of the problems of tribalism and clericalism in the Church; to show humility along with our certainties; to take far more seriously the study of the Bible in an historical context, as well as divine revelation and to provide opportunities for this; to be joyful and confident. That contemplative prayer be encouraged and taught in all parishes.
—Too much—To be a community, yet can't accept the gay, lesbian, trans, etc.
Promotes equality, spreads love, pushes for peace and justice, and asks us to get involved in the community we live in.
—To love thy neighbour—to care for the environment—to ensure that society is made as equal as possibly.
I'm actually not 100% sure, I suppose to be compassionate, respectful, open-minded.
He is asking us to treat everyone as if they were our neighbour and for us to uphold and live by the Catholic values of respect, humility and compassion.
To be kind, to serve the community, to promote equality, to spread kindness.
To embrace and accept other people's differences as God loves everyone no matter what, e.g. — gay marriage acceptance, to be respectful of other people's circumstances,—e.g. divorced people, to embrace new ideas and positive progression in society, to be kind and respectful to each other.
To embrace all things around us and to respect all of the natural world as we are all made in the image of God—despite our differences. He also asks us to unite in the Kingdom of God and express our faith to through our words and actions to all that are willing to listen.
To have a positive influence on those around us. Embrace Australia's multiculturalism. To not discriminate against those of other faiths/religions, and respect their beliefs and them as person—welcome them (including refugees) into Australia. Be accepting of all people of all races, 'religious status', etc. To not judge people.
Help others, accepting, environment, compassion and social issues.

-Help repair the injustices of the world. -Work together to prevent conflict. -Communicate with Him. -Acknowledge each other's beliefs and views. -Listen to each other.
To be accepting of those less fortunate than ourselves, for example refugees. To work together in helping those in need, those in poverty and those who are part of the increasing homeless epidemic. We need to become a welcoming and compassionate culture which accepts everyone's differences and not cast people aside due to different sexual orientations. We need to focus on societal issues such as racism and domestic violence. We also need to take care of the environment, with increased awareness of global warming and climate change.
—To love one another. —To respect the environment and the people living in it. —To do good in the world, not evil. —To be like Jesus. —You will go to heaven if you walk in his footsteps. —Be accepting of all people, no matter what.
To care for the environment around us.
To consider the lives of others and to respect different beliefs. To be more compassionate and welcoming to those less fortunate and to take care of the environment and our surroundings.
The focus question—"Be true to the life of Jesus in meeting the needs of all people"—What has gone wrong with the Church and its people? Breakdown of relationship between priest/community. —Church favours religious over people e.g. treatment of victims. —Where is the Church morality? Divorced not being able to participate in sacraments. —Where is the Holy Spirit?—The impact of the royal commission on instructional Church. —Young people disconnected and should be engaged in a more inclusive welcoming Church. —Less rules and obligations. —The role of women is not equal in the Church. An encounter with Jesus does not necessarily happen in the structure of the Church. —Experience of Church as seen as orthodox and dogmatic. —Church experience. —At times, open and closed, the world of God. —As a woman, never had a voice—felt abandoned and not accepted. Questionable action of the hierarchy of the Church. Relationship with God deep and personal but not with Church. —Not a living Church and relative to the needs of all 'pockets of living charism found outside the walls of the Church'. —Hierarchy 'unhuman nature of the Church'. —People deeply wounded by the Church e.g. royal commission. —The real message of Jesus is lost 'message of Jesus marginalised, women, divorced are not welcome'.
To be carers of creation, carers of our environment.
We have a responsibility toward the homeless in our society.
To continue to grow in our faith.
Involve young people in leadership.
To have faith in him.
To live through the Christian teachings.
To be more accepting and inclusive of everyone in our society, and work to understand the reasoning behind someone's decisions i.e. around their own body, lifestyle and faith.

God is asking us to be our better selves and help those in our community, country and world. He is asking us to be safe and worldly. To care for ourselves, for others, for countries in search of a better world.
To be an honest, loyal, giving, loving, accepting, forgiving person. Truthful to themselves, their morals and beliefs. A person who follows the ten commandments, and the Golden rule, love your neighbour and God loves you. Support those in need, the less fortunate, those in drought.
Change is good.
Greater unity with other Christian denominations. Working together to build up the Kingdom of God.
I think that God is asking for peace, for all of us to listen and help others.
To be loving and accepting of all people, to make good decisions about the environment, to not ruin the Great Barrier Reef, to be peaceful.
To love and accept one another, and lead a righteous and moral life.
God is asking us to stay true to the Catholic Church values as Australia begins to experience challenges of terrorism, climate change, politics and controversial topics like asylum seekers, etc.
I think that God wants us to help and support people in need (Queensland fires, NSW flood, and NSW drought). God wants us to be kind and caring to one another.
To be hospitable, compassionate, loving people who are able to put our differences aside for the greater good of the world. To take breaks from our everyday life to show thanks.
I do not hold the belief that God has an impact on our lives or that he is asking something of us. I believe that what Australia needs to do in regard to the environment is based on our values as humans, not as what God is asking of us
For a loving and inclusive society. To strengthen the bonds of community through a ground swell in our local parish church communities. These communities are the bedrock of the Church, without a congregation, there is no Church. The Church needs to actively engage with the people who attend the associated parish schools and where there is no parish school, with the members of the local community via social and prayer groups that take into consideration the fact that most people work and cannot come during usual business hours. This may mean trusting parishioners to use the facilities without the administration of the priest. Sacramental enrolment is a great time to engage with families so that they can experience a spirituality that may be missing in their lives, telling the group off for not attending church will not make them want to come again. Feedback on the priests, the pastoral associates and other front-line staff such as administrators in the parish office should be sought regularly from the parishioners and children. A census in May does not tell all! Listen to the people and the community. Engage with the people and the community. Jesus preached tolerance, love, inclusion and subverted hierarchical systems. It is time for the Church to truly embrace this message.
To follow his teachings, of which the greatest is to "love my neighbour as myself."
To be aware of the run-down state of the Catholic Church both in Australia and worldwide.

Make our Church relevant to the times including changes to Canon law, real and increased involvement of the laity, engaging with young families and youth, need to be more inclusive of people on the margins, should be welcoming and inclusive
I believe that God is asking us to love God, and love our neighbours.
To clean up our act so that we can move from inward looking to outward looking, to make the changes in structures and cultures necessary for us to do our job again as humble servants and place of focus of the Kingdom of God in and for the sake of the Australian community.
We need a Church where all God's people—clergy and lay people work together across all levels of management, organisation and decision-making. Women must be included as equals in our Church.
God is asking us to be more prayerful and to be more informed about our Catholic faith. To be able to give the reasons for our belief in Jesus Christ and the Church He founded.
To be a sign of His Love through active engagement with and for the people of the place in which we are “planted”. To be active witness to the values of the Gospel through genuine expression of acceptance of “difference” as it presents in the community. To be a model of a relational community in which love of neighbour is both given and received with grace. To have parish leader actively practice subsidiarity at the parochial level. To recognise that the ministerial focus is Christ and that Ordained Ministers are but one facet of ministry of and in the Church. Women to have inclusion in the public leadership of the Local and parochial Church in the areas of Worship, Ministry and administration. To be responsive to the desires of lay people to serve by providing pathways and formation to informal and commissioned ministries.
I believe God is asking us to be faithful, to submit to His teaching authority, (the Catholic Church) with humility, and trust that He is faithful to His promises. This hasn't happened in my diocese for many, many years. Nobody seems willing to challenge those ideas that contradict the teaching of Jesus, either through the Gospels or through the Church. The Catholic schools seem unwilling to teach Catholic doctrine. One would assume those in teaching roles simply do not abide by these teachings. So why is it called CATHOLIC (the school) when it fails to represent a Catholic ethos. We have been haemorrhaging youth from the Church because they have no idea what Catholic faith actually looks like. We don't teach about a personal intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, we simply sacramentalise children and send them and their parents on their way. I believe God is asking us to live authentic Christian lives in our families. This is a challenge, but with faith and support we can begin this very exciting adventure to actually walk with God. This is a reality that we seem to dismiss. Why? We seem to be afraid to take our faith seriously, to step out of the boat, to set our hearts upon the deep. We need to be challenged by sermons that call us to walk upright. Programs like ALPHA are having a big impact on many parishes in the USA and here as well. We should run ALPHA programs in schools as well—high schools, but often those with authority seem to be on a different trajectory, more in line with secular culture than with evangelisation. Jesus Christ was not a political figure urging social justice, but He is the Eternal Son of God, the Word made flesh. What part of that do we think we can condense? We should be reaching out to all, inviting them to come into a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ. Are we serious about the Gospel? It doesn't seem like we are interested in promoting this idea. Some

are, but very often their efforts are stymied but those that are often in positions of authority, and simply do NOT believe in the message. This is incredibly frustrating for those of us who are trying to raise our children in the faith, and build momentum in our community. God is asking us to grow up and show some spiritual maturity, to break free of the shackles of secular humanism and preach the truth, because apparently "it will set us free". So let's be bold. If you are not on board with authentic Catholicism, and hold positions of authority in the Church, you should be asked to step aside. You are blocking the flow of the Holy Spirit and denying people their birthright, to attain eternal salvation. God is asking us to stop being partisan, except in following Him. Stop pushing your barrow into the Church and pushing your own narrow agenda. Society is not accommodating our Christian faith, but then didn't Our Lord speak about that? It's not a popularity contest, we are asked "to pick up our cross" and follow Jesus. Let's allow God to change hearts.

To be mindful and respectful of traditions, but to move forward as a Church.

How can the Church reinvent itself in regards to evangelisation? How can the Church engage in climate change for our survival on earth? Openness—Communication and relationships. Inclusiveness of all people. Positive welcome in schools to all faiths with enrolment. Sense of judgement for those who don't feel welcomed to return to the faith community. Church language to be more inclusive. More visible leadership roles in the Church for women, e.g. women deacons, not as a path to priesthood but to support the priest in his role within the parish community. The role of more married deacons. A greater personal response to the call of baptism. How can the Church support essential and serious dialogue between different cultures? How can the Church promote human rights for people living in oppressed countries and for overseas migrants (like Nauru?) How can the Church: -Engage in open and transparent decision-making? -Show respect and dignity to people's opinions? -Be more active in public and political debates? Young people Pastoral care for children and youth etc. Developing of talents of the youth to engage in the ministry. Revision of the Vox Clara translation of the Missal in 2010. Faith Education in High schools. Family activities outside of Mass to re-engage in the Church community. Can a Pentecostal approach to the ministry to the young be effective in promoting youth ministry/ engagement in the Church? Liturgy Reverence before and after Mass i.e. silence in the Church. Designing new Churches with decent gathering spaces in the future to allow for the community aspect of parish life. Greater focus on Sunday Mass. Promote this by reducing the number of weekday Masses. Insertion of devotional prayers that don't belong there i.e. Hail Mary during the Universal Prayer or devotions to Our Lady prior to Concluding Prayer at Mass by individual priests. Faith. Education Around liturgy. Faith Development. Youth. Children. Advertise the Works of the Church.

Perhaps God is asking the Catholic Church to allow women to be priests and so give a balance of gender among those in authority. In the past, I have supported the stance the Church has taken regarding the restricting of priests to males, but after prayerful reflection, I believe Jesus' example answers this debate. He raised the status of women from nothing to allowing them to be disciples and witnesses which was unheard of in His time and culture. (The first witness to the Resurrection was a woman). Therefore, applying His example to this time and culture I believe He would approve of woman priests. He puts us all on the same level and looks at the heart. Regarding

celibacy, I have already submitted a comment, but again after further prayer and reflection, I believe Christ's example also gives us the answer to this debate and so celibacy should be maintained. Jesus taught by example as much as word and His example as the supreme High priest shows us the way. Thank you for giving us, the people, the chance to speak and listening to us.

I think he is asking us to come together and support, love and rejoice in word of God.

I believe that we are called to stand firm in the faith that Jesus gave us. He told us to listen and follow in both testaments e.g. Is 48:17 and Jn 14:6. We must not change our truths to suit public opinion. We must stand by what Jesus taught us and the lessons from the old testament. In doing this, we should acknowledge the faults within ourselves and treat those who hate us and would have us mould ourselves to society, with love and patience. We are people of love, faith, hope and charity and once we erode on Word of God, we are lost. Jesus said clearly that he brought division and it is very evident today. Many of our people have drifted, some through real hurt, some through pride. Whatever the reason, we need to reach out to them and show them God's love. Our very real mission at the moment, I think, is healing the broken hearted wherever they are. We must put more time into prayer and more faith into believing in prayer ourselves. I am a committed practising Catholic but I also associate with interdenominational groups for prayer and outreach. The Protestants I mix with are not afraid to speak of God in all sorts of company but many of my Catholic friends are stuck in the idea that religion is a private matter. We need to equip our people with ways to reach out to the hurt and lonely through the Gospel as well as with food and companionship. I rarely hear a sermon in our Church about what Catholics believe, the sacredness of the Holy Eucharist, or how to live as Jesus lived. We need this. We need to build up our own communities—some parishes are good at this but more are very insular. Community is a vital part of evangelisation. How can we invite people in when we leave them to attend Mass and go home with no support? One of the things I have learnt from the Catholic school of Evangelisation is the importance of personal testimony but I never hear any sermons on this. To share God, we must look at ourselves and see what he has done in our lives. It is incredible what you find when someone helps you look. We so often see the doom and gloom of our lives as a time of being alone. In reality, it is then that he carried us. I have found so many examples of that in my life and with the help from the CSOE and my Protestant brothers and sisters I can now talk freely about what God has done in my life the miraculous things that I have seen in answer to prayer. People listen when they hear personal things!

To have a Christian voice in a public place. To protect and nurture the vulnerable, children and the elderly. And finally, to pray for the spiritual drought to cease and a revival of our Christian faith in our communities.

Have to make Church relevant to the young generation. Making Mass more relevant to today. Make the Church more accepting of those who choose to have a divorce. Having Catholic events in Australia yearly to allow young Catholics to gather. To heal the reputation of the Church. The idea of a 'practicing Catholic' needs to change.

To heal the reputation of the Church. Making attending the Mass more relevant to ALL. Give a voice to the lay people of the Church. Move from a hierarchical structure to collegiality structure.

For Catholics to walk the walk and talk the talk. There seems to be a large disconnect between adolescent society—that Catholic are hypocrites. They say they follow Jesus, but they have closed minds to the marginalised in society, especially same sex relationships. The culture of priests needs to change. The congregation is asking for a balance of traditional rituals and progressive ideas.

The Church needs to have more up to date information this is what the younger people are after. To not always ...

To make an effort into trying to bring back the marginalised and hurt parishioners. To look after existing, practising parishioners. It seems at the moment there is such a push to get back "lost sheep" that the few faithful parishioners are made to feel they are not "doing enough". We need to keep the few people we have left, feel appreciated.

God is asking us to work for social justice in our secular society. We need to open our doors to the unheard people, refugees, Indigenous, working poor and farmers.

Evangelisation—we have become a divided Church—make the Catholic Church truly universal. Allow baptised Christians from any denomination to receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church. Give priests the option to marry and accept women priests. Simplify the process to becoming a Catholic—currently too many hoops to jump through. Get rid of all the man-made rules and go back to the 10 Commandments. People are too caught up in the rules of the Church: fasting and holy days of obligation, they think that's what being Catholic is—but what is really important is the person and being more like Jesus in our actions. We must also go back to having a relationship with Jesus. Allow divorcees to receive the Eucharist, do not forsake those who want to come to Jesus. The listening and dialogue groups should continue after the Plenary Council to provide support in the parish. These groups can be based on passages in the Bible and provide local Catholics with a forum for their voices and views to be heard and discussed and focus on how that influences them and their experiences.

God is asking for us to look after the environment that feeds and looks after us. God is asking us to be accepting of refugees and to understand and reach out to our Indigenous people and those that are marginalised. God wants us to stop taking and to start giving, we take from the land, we take from each other and we give so little back. God wants us to stop talking digitally and to start [to] speak to each other.

There is a huge opportunity for the Catholic Church to become a beacon of light for those looking for answers to their chronic illnesses. Those who suffer from chronic illness seek healing desperately and this search often leads them into New Age practices. The Church is in the business of bringing peace, love and healing and it should be the number one go-to place anyone with chronic illness should seek healing from. The New Age is set-up to accept with open arms those seeking healing. Our Church needs to offer THE solution to healing illness. "Be In Health" ministries in America do a great job of this and it would be so fantastic to see the Catholic Church become a dispenser of such profound, true and deep healing to those who suffer chronic illness.

Evaluate how the Catholic Church operates and to look at some of its teachings, and for the bishops to have the courage to make the necessary changes for the survival of His Church in this day and age.
For our Catholic leaders to stand up and truly reflect on the culture of the Catholic Church in Australia and ask themselves, are we truly the face of God, are we truly the Spirit of God in this World? Do we leave every personal encounter, every public engagement, every room with people having a sense that God was with us, and God is with us on this Earth thru this person?
God is asking us to be humble and truthful brothers and sisters of Jesus. For too long, the Church has been an arrogant dispenser of rules.
Compassion and harmony. Peace among men. To cease placing rituals above kindness. For the Church to act like the son of God and to stop acting like they are God. To stop the Church seeking control and power over its people but to be a sanctuary for all.
To reassess where to go in the future in order to move forward after the disgraceful findings of the recent Royal Commission. God would be asking us to forgive but is the Church taking action to seek it?
To make the Church relevant to the contemporary Australian society, responding authentically to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so that the Church becomes a voice for good, justice and reconciliation as well as DOING good, justice and reconciliation. Also, for the Church to be more faithful to Vatican II so that its documents may be brought to life and acted upon once again.
To be completely open to whatever direction He is asking us to follow, no matter how radical this is.
I think God is asking us to be aware of the legacy of our predecessors. Our people have been lied to with cover ups and manipulation of truths for generations. The mismanagement and complete lack of understanding of the human spirit shown by so many Church Officials has devastated individuals and communities. The power and self-importance of some clergy and a Culture of elitism is completely opposite to the humility deeply embedded in teachings of Jesus. Particular theologies of the Church which have been embraced to the exclusion of women or other minorities have created this elitism. This shame projected onto minorities and power exerted over minorities causes mental health issues beyond what a human can and should have to put up with. People have been destroyed, souls crushed. I think God is asking us to seriously think about who Jesus was, how he treated people. How can we seriously think that what has gone on in the Church can ever be forgiven? How can the Church ever have the trust restored in them if even today Church leaders deny or make light of situations or do not accept some personal responsibility for not acting? How can we create a culture of Trust?
We think God is asking of us how to encourage the youth of our Catholic Community, particularly High school aged students, so from 12 years old to 18/19 years old, how to appreciate and deepen their faith more?
A personal encounter with Jesus is the way forward in the Church. All our activities at parish and diocesan level need to focus on assisting people to experience this personal encounter with Jesus; this includes an encounter at mind level with the formation of the intellect, an encounter at heart

level with exhortations and testimonies to increase trust in God; and an encounter at soul level to prepare for prayer and intimacy with God. Only after a personal encounter with Jesus can any formation in mission and service make any sense or be effective. Our Christian role is to prepare people for a personal encounter with Jesus, but only the Holy Spirit can actually make that encounter happen. Just as Jesus allowed God's Spirit to work in His Life, we must also allow this very same Spirit to be at work in us. To follow Him, we must do as He did. We can also witness that the power of the Gospel message stands the test of time and through periods of great changes in society. With the Second Vatican Council as an example, where many movements were initiated by the Holy Spirit, we can affirm this active presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit to the people of our times and invite them to have full confidence in the presence our loving God in us, and in His creation. Under the Holy Spirit's guidance and power, we need to work in unity with others to make the presence of God more visible in our social and economic structures and make clear to the world that God's presence is in all creation. This is the challenge to our Catholic Church today! This Good News, that God is with us and wants us to actively live in His presence, drove St Paul and the early Christians to take this Holy Spirit initiated encounter with Jesus to the people of their time. It is time for us to intentionally carry on that mission. Time and time again, Saint Paul affirmed to the Churches that the same Spirit that moved in Jesus moved in them. Our Church must forcefully affirm the divine presence in the lives of our people. The role of the Holy Spirit in leading the Church and the active dispensing of the Gifts of the Spirit, especially His charisms, to our people must again become fully alive within our Church and not be left in the peripheries as it is now. This is not an option, but the way forward. St Paul wrote: "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).

I think God is asking in Australia at this time is to be a united front against issues that take place in Australian society such as women's safety, terrorism and ultimately death. I also think God is asking us to be more accepting even though we are a very multicultural community I believe that if you take away all the legal and financial pressures of allowing desperate souls that are need of not only physical comfort but emotional as well as mental support. The atrocious behaviour and culture of nit-picking individuals that are in need is not a characteristic directed by the Bible.

God is asking us to sit down and listen—To each other, to ourselves, and to God, both the male and the female voices of God. Our youths need both guidance and involvement. They need to know that the Church understands where they are coming from, does not dictate but can explain and model faith traditions and practice. I stress the word 'model'. It is not enough to say and tell, one must DO.

To carry on with Catholic tradition and live out our faith, I believe God is asking us to rethink the Catholic structures we currently have to incorporate a more contemporary approach. One of the structures I believe God is asking us to rethink is that of only males being able to devote their lives to the priesthood. With the number priests on a steep decline, I believe allowing women to serve our Catholic communities would not only alleviate the current pressures on current priests, but allow a women's perspective to be voiced within the Church. This in turn, may increase the

<p>number of Catholics currently attending Mass each week. I also feel that God is asking us to reconsider and allow priests (whether they be men or women) to marry. Once again, this would increase the number of people willing to serve their Catholic communities as a priest, would give lay people and priest greater understanding of each other, especially those in relationships and may also increase Mass attendance. Firstly, in light of the needs in His creation, I would say stewardship would be high on God's "agenda" starting with our own homeland in particular. Second, is proclamation to youths. I remember having a conversation with a priest who suggested we just "skip" a generation and go straight to the youth in re-energising the community. "Invest" spiritually and financially in engaging the youth and music ministry I believe, is key. Lastly, the call to "listen with the ear of our heart", and respond to the global crisis with refugees.</p>
<p>I think God is asking that the laity be listened to and heard by the leaders of the Church in Australia.</p>
<p>I believe God is calling us to practice humility, to embrace and not seek to judge the motives of people who turn to the Church for access to the sacraments for themselves (for example, marriage) or sacraments for their children such as baptism. Jesus calls us to be inclusive not exclusive. It was the Pharisees after all who criticised Jesus for mixing with prostitutes and the Tax Collectors.</p>
<p>To educate practising Catholics about their faith, to help them actually meet Jesus so their faith becomes alive. To support parents and families much more to be able to be the domestic Church. To especially offer support to practising faithful families who are trying to live out an active and alive faith, and therefore have many children, and thereby be excluded from retreats and Catholic education and marriage renewal courses, etc. due to cost and logistics.</p>
<p>To become a Faithful Church. To return to the genuine Dogma and Doctrine of unbroken unity with the Church of the past and in doing so, dispel the confusion that is rife. To uphold Canonical remedial punishments in order to protect the Faithful.</p>
<p>Better Leadership and Governance in the Church. This includes a need for greater transparency, gender balance and leadership roles for laity.</p>
<p>God is asking us to finally become equal. Equality is such an important issue. Dignity for each individual human being to be recognised as equal regardless of their gender, race, sexual preference. Equality for those unable to conceive to be able to access medical intervention to aide in their chances. God enabled us to contribute our time, talents and treasures to advance mankind with technology and medicine and for us to ignore couples unable to conceive is ignoring these God-given abilities. Women must have the same voice as men in the community for they are strong, educated, able and wise. Priests are human and have human urges and to deny them a partner denies them equality. Divorce is never wanted or planned for and in some cases, necessary for the safety and wellbeing of the individuals involved—the Church should not turn their backs on them as this denies their dignity and makes them less equal then their peers.</p>
<p>For the church to go back to being Holy and not using it as a hall.</p>
<p>A more inclusive Church—a closer friendship between clergy and the congregation, and a greater understanding of the rules and governances under which the Church operates. There appears to</p>

be so many decisions made in which the majority of people have had no say. A knowledgeable congregation is more likely to be involved in more ways. More encouragement to read the Bible, adult education lessons. We hear a lot about God and Jesus, but we could hear a lot more about the Holy Spirit and His works. We ALL need to support the priests we have, or they will all be suffering from burnout, frustration and lack of enthusiasm. Take all the administrative tasks away from the priests, including having to cook their own meals all the time, to allow them to concentrate on being a priest, ministering to the parishioners and having time to evangelise. More support for the people who live in the country and have very little access to priests and/or religious.

1. Why are we spending tens of millions of dollars building basilica style of Churches in the [-] area of NSW ([-] and [-]) when it is acknowledged widely, that congregations are diminishing at alarming rates? Why isn't this money being used for compensation, for victims of abuse by Church personnel? 2. Some bishops/priests travel halfway across the world to work in the Church in Australia, yet the bishop of [-] leaves his family that are three hours away, and the Diocese forks out millions of dollars to purchase a house for him to live in so his family has somewhere to stay when they visit. The Cathedral house at [-] has ample accommodation for several priests and a disused Convent attached, that could be used! Motels are also used by most families, why not the bishop's family? 3. Each week from my pension, I struggle to allocate money to the weekly envelope at Mass-yet there seems to be a growing trend in the Diocese ([-]) for priests to have private homes purchased for them so that they don't have to live in the Presbytery attached to their Church. If the parishes can afford maintain two residences for their local priest, then my weekly donation can be better spent on my own family needs! 4. If the Catholic Church is to survive in the current climate, serious consideration needs to be given, to ordaining females to ministry. We also have an anomaly where our priests cannot marry, but we have several married priests (with families) who were ordained in the Anglican Church, but jumped ship, when the Anglican Church began ordaining women! Hypocrisy abounds!

To educate the nation on the richness of Catholicism and have an attitude of acceptance and warmth, making the Church an accessible place for all people, especially the young people. Also, to train and place already faithful young people in leadership positions as we are the future of this Church.

I think that God is asking us to be a people of hope. He wants us to be in communion with those who need our help but this needs to be done in a way that does not diminish His basic teachings. It is necessary for us to find a way to accept and help all without simply bowing to what is popular or the current trend.

From a uniquely privileged position, to model Christ to the world through:- proper stewardship of the environment, welcome and compassion to refugees, sharing our abundance with the world's poor through aid and charity, being an inclusive, thriving Church that is attractive to youth and growing, being a beacon of social justice and equity in a suffering and damaged world.

St Pope John Paul II said that until the Indigenous peoples of Australia are an integral part of the Church, it will not be complete. I believe that only the Indigenous people can do this effectively for

themselves. We need more Indigenous priests and other religious, to evangelise. As a minimum, perhaps we need a special seminary and other training facilities.

—To have compassion and love for those who are less fortunate (Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Indigenous, poor, homeless). —Where is the Love in your actions? —A reduced focus on ME but an increased focus on WE. To share our wealth with those less fortunate and to teach our children to include God in their everyday life. Be united and committed in our faith especially because of the Royal Commission. I really believe it has tested people's faith and turned away many who have felt betrayed by the Church and God. How can we build communities that foster the faith of believers, but also welcome/embrace those beyond our communities? To be aware of our privilege and to use it to advocate for the less privileged. To hold onto traditions and flourish in the simple things. Life is busy and this makes life very short. We cannot lose the importance of family and faith. I think God is asking us to be more compassionate and welcoming. I feel we need to move more with the times and embrace diversity in all its forms. We need to make people feel valued and not just another number in an organisation. To make decisions as a group, to listen to the spirit to enable changes to structures and strategies. God is asking us to consider the future of the Catholic Church. Resurrect my belief in God.

My wife and I believe that God is asking our Church in Australia of which we have been active members since birth to: 1. To take Pope Francis's encyclical "Laudato Si'" seriously and to take aggressive action throughout all dioceses to implement the encyclical and not just talk about it. E.g.: Speak openly about climate change in our churches and lobby governments to take serious actions to counter all the impacts of this change. Our leaders have for too long pandered to the Climate deniers in the government and have therefore failed to protect God's wonderful creation. It is time our Church started taking concrete action: 1. Putting solar panels on schools and Church buildings. 2. Speaking out about deforestation and loss of animal habitat. 3. Speaking out about fossil fuels and their destruction of the Barrier Reef and arable lands. 4. Divesting from Fossil Fuels as a number of Catholic Institutions have done throughout the world. 5. Realising the utter urgency of the impacts of Climate Change especially on the most vulnerable of God's creatures. God also wants our Church to speak out and encourage our Federal government to increase aid to the poorest areas of the world, as they have decreased the aid dramatically in recent years. We also believe that God wants us to examine the relevance and cost of Catholic education as so few emerge from them as practising Catholics. We believe that the founders of many of the religious teachers would be most upset as they observe the Catholic schools no longer cater for the needs of the poor in our society.

To be more open to new ideas and changes in the Catholic Church and for women to hold more prominent positions in the CHURCH and for READINGS to be more on the women in the Bible.

That our Church has a culture that is Australian and not European. That is more inclusive of women in every area of Church roles and decision-making. That married people be included in every area of Church roles and decision-making. That we are welcoming of every human being, created by God. That we look at hierarchy and see if there is another way. That vestments, etc., churches don't reflect royalty and riches.

Church and Inclusivity. If the Church were able to lead more in demonstrating inclusivity, in particular by allowing women a more prominent place, it would make itself more relevant to people. The attitude of the priesthood being for men, and the insignificance of women in faith leadership is a throbbing sore and a barrier which continues to drive people away. The Church needs to revision its position on this power dynamic, as has the Episcopal communion where women now serve in the role of bishop. In short and to say it again, surely the Holy Spirit is not gender specific. The Church needs to make changes so that men and women are seen as different but equal, so that new people can worship. The present arrangement makes no sense at all in today's world—it is dated and limiting. Church and the priesthood. Priests not being allowed to marry, needs to be reviewed and considered as marriage as an option being an imperative. The original idea of the priest being set apart for a work through celibacy is of course a great one, and one to which some are called. However, the call to be a priest and the call to celibacy need to be separated so that celibacy and marriage can each be options for someone considering a vocation. Love does not restrict—it enables and develops. A priesthood which accommodates difference seems to be very overdue. Church and Confession Matters around confession feel like they need to be refreshed and some pertinent questions asked. Why we are not forgiven when we confess in our hearts at Mass? When Jesus gave his life, did he say we need an intermediary for our sins to be forgiven? If people require it, and as we are so short of priests, why can't people be asked to write their 'sins' down on paper" and place at the altar for burning later—like we do when we light a candle? I would suggest that we keep the sacrament of one-to-one confession for those for whom this has meaning, but that other means of coming right with God are also created. Church and the words. The language used in Church is hugely dated and not geared towards new unchurched people. Words like "Glory", "Almighty", "Guilty soul", "Extol"—what do these mean to a young person venturing into Mass? Or to a newcomer seeing God through coming to Church?

To assist those less fortunate than the majority. To be accepting of all walks of life. To not judge before knowing the entire story.

God is asking us to remember that he said the greatest commandment was to love one another as he has loved us.

That the Catholic Church becomes safe and trustworthy for the faithful. Work to renew the trust and bring give back those who are faithful to the Lord.

To renew the practices of the Church in Australia so it may meet the needs of the members of the Church as well as the Aust. society of the future.

To turn away from sin and follow the gospel. To pray and invite God's Holy Spirit to heal and renew His Catholic Church on earth, to weed out all sin such as pride, deceit, falseness, lies, division, intolerance, greed, impurity and disunity, and to provide good, holy men and women to lead and teach with truth and love as Jesus did. We have to pray almost with a sense of desperation. We could have special gatherings, Masses, to appeal to our Loving God for help and mercy, to nourish all the faithful, to bring back the lost and to convert unbelievers and be true to Christ's teaching.

To spread God's message of love. To involve students. To care for the environment—stop polluting and cherish what we have. To care for all mankind. Stay strong in our faith and to stay

connected to our core values. Give encouragement to the hopeless; especially those victims of abuse by the Church clergy. Rediscover the presence of God in all things. To accept change as we move forward. Discernment between what is not important and what is in life. Reconnect with a worshipping community where the laity, including women, play important roles. To love one another and to treat all people with justice.
To deal fairly with the victims of child sexual abuse, including consideration of how those accused of abuse or cover up are treated.
To improve the Church's response to child sexual abuse, especially improving transparency, honesty, stronger engagement in the issue by the clergy, more open discussion of the issue to help the victims and the Church to heal. There were also a number of practical suggestions proposed.
To be a more tolerant, welcoming and accepting Church. Increased youth engagement. A simpler Church, with promised reforms delivered. Jesus was down to earth and his teachings were simple and JUST. We need the lay people to have more say. Increased transparency. Increased appointment of women to leadership and decision-making roles, including women priests. Reinstate the third rite of reconciliation. Making greater use of sacramental programs.
To engage our youth and give them better support.
To be a more inclusive Church, more representative of the community we serve. To actively support healing for people harmed by the Church and its actions. See attached.
To invigorate and invest more in adult catechesis. The primary catechesis of Vatican II was adult education. Catholic education is an adult religion, not a children's one: that is why it is important to have a focus on adult catechist. This allows the door that was opened as children to be expanded as we get older.
Equality and equity in the Church. A more inclusive and representative Church, with equitable inclusion of women in leadership roles. Acting with greater compassion and care. Change that was to come under Vatican II to be delivered. Acting in accordance with Jesus' teachings.
God is asking us to pay greater attention to how we re-evangelise children and their families through sacramental preparation
God is calling us to a greater evangelisation within our communities and beyond to create a deeper love of him and what a life in Jesus offers.
God is asking us to rebuild small struggling urban faith communities into larger faith communities, to build an environment, to re-evangelise the faithful and create a dynamic environment to evangelise and witness to the wider secular community.
God is asking us to review the role and relationships of the pastor to his community to enable the pastor to be more focused on his role as shepherd and minister of Word and Eucharist and the community members to be more responsible and involved in their administration.

To respond with honesty, compassion and generosity to victims of abuse. To rebuild trust among Catholics and the broader community. To act as an organisation in accordance with what we teach. To remove compulsory celibacy ('It goes against our human nature').
The calling of the spirit—educating young children to remain strong, practicing Catholics in adulthood.
The focus of the listening dialogue group was "Clergy", in particular, lack of vocations now and in the future and reforming training for the priesthood to make it more relevant to now. This included child protection training, relationships and sexuality. Other areas that were raised, included: Child abuse, modernising the liturgy, more Bible study, married priests/widowers, permanent female deaconesses, role of women in the future of the Catholic Church, more recognition of women in the Church, more deacons to help take the load off priests, try to exclude overseas priests who are hard to understand, unity and peace, to trust in Him, an increased awareness of the Bible, more Lenten groups/adult faith, promotion of more "Spirituality in the pub" groups, spirit of St Mary of the Cross in courage and strength, an earlier response to clerical child abuse, exclude Latin from first Reconciliation and first Communion, sacrament preparation for children be the same in every parish, a Church with strength and purpose to meet today's needs, address the obvious 'cover ups' and secrecy in relation to religious 'bad' behaviour and lack of accountability, something like the men's shed—i.e. activity based for teens, keeping teenagers as church-goers, honesty and openness, to identify areas of religious/Church activities/behaviour that must be identified and improved, sacramental programs not aligned with (unsure what words to use?) parents church-going, better roles for women in the Church—not just washing linen and polishing brass, and renewal—turn to the Lord with love.
To be aware of others' needs, to be community-minded which gives an understanding of others and their needs. To love one another as God loves us. To love God's gift of nature and the world, and to look after it better.
God is calling his people to be faithful, to reject the falseness that the secular godless world bombards us with, and to return to the fundamental truths, richness and fullness of our Catholic faith.
God is asking us to be more open to new ways of being. Church; to new ways of celebrating Sunday; to new ways of cherishing our Eucharistic spirituality; to new levels of transparency and relationships.
I have attached this response to the Plenary Question as a PDF at the end of this submission. In this response, I ask the Council Fathers to consider the needs of a vulnerable group of women that I don't believe is even on the Church's radar at present. I've supplied some information about who these women are, their needs and some suggestions about what God might be asking of us as the Church to meet those needs and serve this vulnerable group of women. These women and their needs are perhaps more pronounced today than ever before.
* Rediscover the richness of our Catholic Tradition and rituals. * Find a balance between Church teaching (on divorce / homosexuality, etc.) and compassion. I think most priests are actually very compassionate and inclusive when issues are raised with them; however, the perception is that

they won't be (because of Church teachings) and this causes a lot of pain. * Be supportive of our priests. * Recognise that people are different so we shouldn't make generalisations about what people want, e.g. Not all young people want rock music in church and a Hillsong type approach to Mass is not necessarily the answer.

I think God wants the Church to be inclusive. Women's gifts must be recognised. There has to be a breakdown of the patriarchal system. Clergy must be able to marry and women ordained.

As the disciples of Christ to carry out his wishes, through good example; this must come from the top down. Structural change from within the Vatican. Job description, accountability, transparency, productivity and measure of time, pray, and leisure. Vows to be revisited, denounced; new ones drafted. The number of cardinals, bishops, and clergy up for downsizing. Economic rationalization; money directed to the needy, and poor. For the Church acceptance of the rejected; scorned; marginalized; to encourage and promote women's roles as leaders and preachers. More money and programs at the ground levels. How we celebrate Mass; revitalized through band, music, songs, choir, evangelical guest speakers. More involvement of laity. Revisit the laws of annulment; divorce, and its cost factor. Ongoing training of priests in people skills, technical ability. Strong development of a Youth Group to plan, demonstrate meaning of celebration, feast day. More interpretations of Bible readings and analysis of the true message. More opportunities for Bible Study with Deacon or priest to facilitate. Opportunities after Mass when the crowds are together; for discussion groups to start. Encourage Congregation to feel free to talk, discuss and ask questions to the present priest or another priest, Leader, or Deacon. Having an anonymous question box; for thoughts, concerns, and doubts of each parishioner. Everybody is heard and included; gives a genuine feeling of inclusion. Reduce the number of Masses to give priest room to do the other things as mentioned above. Invite people who do not practice their faith because of abuse; misunderstandings; to voice their concerns through the question box; they will be present to hear their answers. Have an OPEN Day of what is Catholicism? Barbecue for all. Well-advertised beforehand, to get a great response.

I feel God is asking us to be patient with the Church at this time in Australia. It has been an 'eye-opening' time during the Royal Commission into Institutions for the Catholic Church in Australia. I would never have believed these things as described at the Royal Commission ever happened but now I know that they must have or the survivors would never have come forward and been heard and believed. My own experience with priest, brothers and nuns never revealed anything like these horrible things. Therefore, the Church needs to be transparent and open. Surely, the seminaries must teach those learning to be priests the correct way of dealing and being with people of all ages. The men hoping to be priests must be screened more thoroughly on the reasons for wanting to become a priest. If there is any doubt as to their suitability, they must be refused admission to study for the priesthood or in the case of the religious, the same rigorous testing must take place. I do not think the removal of celibacy would make any difference nor [would] allowing priests to marry. We know there is a lack of priests nowadays so there will need to be more lay persons taking roles in the Church but they too would need to be screened. There are always many 'holy' people who look down on others so I believe these people would not be suitable for these roles.

I am writing on behalf of the Neocatechumenal community of the parish of the [-] [-] NSW. We broke this question down into three sub-questions: I will give a brief summary of our responses. 1. How do we provide Christian formation? —Announce the Kerygma (the proclamation of the Good News) through organised public announcements, personal contact and witness by communities of faith. —Christian formation needs to consist of catechesis which initiates individuals into the life of faith through experience, catechesis, scrutinising the word of God, mystagogy and other systematic methods. —The goals of such formation must be an adult faith, ongoing conversion and evangelisation. —Parish priests need to be open to all charisms of the Church that provide Christian formation, rather than rejecting them as often happens. —Greater integration and exposure of witness and communities of faith within parishes and other Catholic groups. — Greater focus on evangelising other branches of the Church such as Catholic Education. 2. How do we transmit the faith to the next generation and how do we keep the young people in the Church? —Domestic celebrations in the home. Morning prayer on Sunday. This allows a dialogue between parents and children, especially an emphasis on the word, what is God saying? Discernment. Prayer and reconciliation. —The parents need to have a strong faith. Also they need to baptise their children AND continue their transmission of faith in addition to the sacraments. — Young people want HONESTY! —We need a testimony of youth from other young people. —Keep the Churches open for prayer or to speak to the parish priest. The Church needs to be less like a business and more pastoral. 3. How can the Church evangelise? —Catechesis in public arenas. Perhaps the areas of Australia with low wealth: the word of God is better received among the poor. —Being a witness to people: People who hear Christians being a witness and using personal experiences have responded to this in a positive way. —Going door to door (with the permission of the bishop) and giving witness of personal experiences of God. —Being open to mission families and missionary priests to "unpopular" parishes in the diocese.

We think that God is asking the Australian Church to remain faithful in today's society as envisaged by the Second Vatican Council.

I trust that God wants us to proclaim His love and pour out His grace to all people regardless their background. God wants people to believe in Him and to assure His believers in every step that He is with them regardless of any events, happiness or catastrophic. God wants more people to believe him and not to lose faith in Him by means of any treatments or situations.

Build people, the Church up, don't pull them down. Hold people accountable for their criminal actions. Bigger picture thinking has to start with actions at the local level.

I think it's time for a more open door and accepting approach to all regardless of life's circumstances—it's not for us or the Church to judge.

I think God is asking us to remodel our Church in such a way that it resembles more closely the example given to us by Jesus himself. In other words, we need to be a Church that is more humble, more inclusive, more open, more flexible and more transparent. In other words, a Church where clericalism has disappeared and been replaced with Gospel values. Sadly, the rise of clericalism in the Church, particularly over the past 30 years, has resulted in a hierarchy that that is becoming more and more distant from the laity, less transparent, more closed and rigid. Because of the way the Church is structured, only bishops can bring about change, and so the

more clerical the bishops become, the more inward-looking they become, and the more they become focused on protecting the image of the institutional Church. Cardinal Reinhard Marx's intervention at the recent Vatican summit on the protection of minors was very enlightening. He spoke about how clergy find it difficult to accept criticism, how they don't want to participate in processes and protocols that are generally accepted as best practice in the area of accountability, how they destroyed files on priests who had sexually abused minors, or even refused to create the file in the first place. If we can somehow change the clerical culture, and the clerical mind-set, then we are taking a big step forward to eradicating these problems, and at the same time helping to bring about the sort of Church that Jesus instructed us to build. In his closing address at the Vatican summit Pope Francis referred to "the plague of clericalism" and said it provided the fertile ground "for all these disgraces." Pope Francis has spoken consistently about clericalism over the last six years but his words have fallen on deaf ears. Hopefully after this Vatican summit, things will change and the bishops and cardinals will be more open to the Pope's pleas.

- The people who attended feel called by the Spirit to act in accordance with Jesus' teachings, and for the Church to also act this way. They see that the institutional Church often and consistently behaves contrary to Jesus' teachings, especially (and not only) in relation to child sexual abuse, its cover up and the response to date to the victims and to the findings of the Royal Commission. The participants collectively believed that this call from the Spirit is clear, and direct.
- 'We just want the Church to behave as Jesus taught. It's not complicated'.
- 'We need to maximise the pastoral care to the victims. The lack of pastoral care for the victims is unforgivable'.
- 'Why can we not have women priests? We need to be more inclusive'.
- Pastoral needs of so many people: abuse victims, people who are house bound. 'We need to live what Jesus said: love your neighbour as yourself. We can live that commitment, regardless of what the celibate guys are telling us. As a witness of Jesus in our contemporary society. The Church needs systemic change—more grass roots—and to be representative'.
- Drop in centres—somewhere you can get help. 'Somewhere to feel safe and not be hurried on'. The Church needs something where people can come and volunteer, with a facilitator or counsellor. 'Not just people who are needy: for all people to be welcome.' and see attached document.

The issue covered in the listening dialogue session was: why are Catholics going elsewhere and leaving the Catholic Church? Why isn't the Church compensating victims of child sexual abuse? We need to change the culture, the hypocrisy and the double standards within the Church. Other issues raised included: Speak to our children about morality, don't water it down; encourage praying outside of Mass—example a prayer and worship group especially for youth; don't be judgemental—there could be a logical reason for the way people think; try to talk the fear out of some sacraments, example reconciliation to help people feel more comfortable; look at the practicality of different ministries and where each ministry can lead to fulfil a persons extended vocation; the laity should step forward and take a stronger role—there must be more involvement, not just spectating; married priests; Mass is boring and most people don't understand what goes on—there is a lack of feeling inspired by the Mass, closed off by priests and parishioners; the Catholic faith should not be seen as a law maker but more of a faith builder; family spiritual support; clergy should try to stand in the shoes of different individuals; people must stop judging the whole of the clergy by the deeds of those who were the guilty ones—

rubbering priests is one of our biggest downfalls; telling youth that it's all about a personal relationship with Jesus; look at myself and there is a lack of understanding of the Catholic faith by its followers. We need education, not just rules.

RESPONSE FROM GROUP A: EVANGELISATION (i) —To be people of action and full of life. —To be generous and life giving to all those we encounter and never asking for anything in return. —To encourage people who no longer practice their faith to return to the Church. —To be able to share how we feel confidently and without hesitation. —To be joyful and proud that we love our God and have the courage to live that joy without any burden. —To do more, show more love, speak more about our faith and our God. —To Pray more. PASTORAL (ii) —To help those who are worse off than us. E.g. people out of work or struggling to make ends meet. —To show compassion and love to the sick and lonely. ONGOING EDUCATION (iii) —To read the Bible and reflect on the life of Christ. —To continually strive to be informed and prayerful. INCLUSION (iv) —To Listen to those who have a story about our Church often negative. —To be more community minded within our parish. —To be more welcoming and less exclusive. —To refugee crisis around the world. Is a challenging one for all countries. How best can we be part of the solution? —The faraway divided Catholic? Encounter with each other. Are they authentic? —To be more accepting of others outside our faith. PRIEST (v) —priest to serve their community even when outside their comfort zone.

What is God Asking of Us in Australia at this time? RESPONSE FROM GROUP B: INCLUSION (i) — That we help to bring people back to Church. (lapsed Catholics). To be there for them to talk. —How do we engage the young to see Church as an integral part of their lives? —How do you convince people that God is part of our lives when historical events seem to suggest otherwise? (ii) —Pray for our knowledge to reach our hearts not just our heads! COMPASSION (iii) —For more compassion towards each other and to always live the gospel. —To reconnect with the Church to be an active member of the Church. Especially at the parish level to make Christ central in your life. TOLERANCE (iv) —For priest to be more forgiving and loving. —Less rigid and more forgiving and loving. —That parishioners who have had marriage breakdowns, allow them back in. BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES (i) Grow our Christian communities through genuine welcome and caring. —Involved everyone who wants to join us... put no one aside. No decisions from a parish should exclude anyone from the sacraments. —Come together in love to build a Christian community. —Be welcoming to all we meet, especially those we haven't seen before and the little ones. Don't dilute with hand out bulletins or asking for volunteers. —God asking us to be more welcoming to all people. —God (Jesus) came to call sinners and the outcast our Church does not. We must invite all if we want to be Jesus like. —I think God is asking us to remain the good kind spirit filled people we are and to continue to gather as one in community to praise and Glorify God regularly. This must be done with the free spirit of love so will need some change in the way we do now. CHANGES TO PRIEST AND CHURCH LAW (ii) —Priests are lonely. Priests are not trained in all aspects needed to run a parish. —Priests in all countries should be allowed to marry. —The rules and laws. i.e. Canon law needs to reflect the needs of the Church, its people in this century. Some of these laws are irrelevant to what a parish should be able to be. —Our priests are isolated and, in many cases, very lonely. Something needs to be done to stop this cruelty. —Some changes I think God would like to see is how his people are held together e.g.

Change in the priesthood, change in the rules and laws. —Build communities that are strong enough to endure through a period of fewer priests. —Back to the basics of the promise of the Gospel, learn how to love God more without Cannon Law. INDIVIDUAL GROWTH (iii) —Be open to the Holy Spirit in what you say and do. —Show love on your face that enables others to share their stories with you. —I think God would want his people to always be looking towards his/her relationship with him. —To ask ourselves if our actions are consistent with his desire to show his love through our involvement with ...

I think God is asking us in Australia to bring the Church up to the 21st century. I think the Church needs to become more open to including the whole of the faithful more fully in the structure and work of the Church. The Church needs to involve the faithful in the election of clergy. The Church needs to listen to the recommendations of the Commission into sexual abuse of children in institutions and to put these recommendations into practice. I'm sure that God is asking us to make sure that these abuses never have a chance of happening again and to listen to the needs of the survivors of sexual abuse and repair the evil that these people have suffered at the hands of priests and bishops in the past. The culture of the Church has to change to permit this to happen.

I think God is asking us in Australia to live responsibly in our world with regard to climate change, acceptance of refugees into our land of plenty, changing moral codes and respectfulness of the human being in a world of technological change.

The Church needs to grow we need a more proactive approach—like getting them at a very young age...starting in schools be it Catholic or public. We need more conversions ... there are plenty of Muslims and Hindus who come to our lands and we never approach them for conversion—why is that are we afraid? We can have programs to assimilate these people who do not believe in CHRIST. They are here now and now is the opportunity. If the clergy cannot do it, let the lay people do it ... firstly targeting their women, and then the children.

Provide a SAFE and realistic place for Catholics of all ages to come together. Our younger parents are often not bringing their children to Mass but are still wanting a Catholic education for them. To me, this is an indication that faith is very important to these parents but the Church is not providing a place to develop this need. Priests are often out of touch with the issues that confront families on a daily basis. And there are still far too many who are too controlling and are not as inclusive as they should be. E.g. altar servers predominantly boys with exclusion of girls, need to oversee all aspects of the Mass where there are often more than capable lay people. Jesus' way of the cross repeatedly showed his respect for women and their strength in times of crisis, yet our Church still does not have women as part of the decision-making process.

Firstly, to personify a place of healing and reconciliation. External circumstances, attitudes and behaviours would suggest the heart of the Church is fractured as are the hearts of its people. It begs the question: 'are we in a place to consider significant change to structures whilst still in need of deep healing and reconciliation?' Create/ foster a culture of healing and reconciliation and subsequent opportunities for this as a foundation to further listening to the Spirit. From this place, consider serious reflection re: structures, processes, frameworks that support personal growth, ownership, expression of faith in the context of Ecclesial Community. Don't make change for the

sake of changing (or the loudest minority) but don't be afraid to look honestly, with the Spirit, at structures that no longer serve the expression of faith the Christ Jesus calls us to.
God is asking that our Church be authentic and Christ-centred
God is asking for a Church that is inclusive, Christ centred, compassionate with a collaborative ministry.
<p>God is asking us to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to inspire Catholics to get back to practicing their faith. • Stop and reflect on our beliefs and on where our faith journey is heading. • Involve the younger generation more in our parishes. • Keep Jesus at the centre of our lives and to reflect on the life of Jesus in our life. • Make the Catholic Church more inclusive. • Help the Church grow and become alive. • Make attending Church more relevant to contemporary society. • Heal the reputation of the Church after the Royal Commission into child abuse. • Stop wanting more and to appreciate what we have. • Find ways to gather Catholics more regularly and in community in order to build connections with one another. • Have more priests. If we have more priests there is a better chance of bringing more people back to the Church. • Encourage children to practice their faith. • Educate parents about the Church in order to be better able to pass on their faith and our Catholic traditions. • Make going to Church more welcoming for all. • Find a way to heal and recover from the pain some leaders of the Church have caused individuals. • Become more loyal to our faith. • Learn more about our faith and our scriptures. • Show a better understanding of cultures and religions. • Spend more time in prayer. • Make this world a better place. God is asking us to accept, tolerate and recognise same sex couples. • Have more lively music. • Encourage people to dress more respectfully when they attend Church. • Find ways to enlighten people to be more interested in Church matters. • Find ways to encourage people to become more familiar with the scriptures. • Create an authentic connection between everyday life and the Church. • Educate the people on progressive ideas e.g. on prayer • Find a balance between traditional rituals and modern-day culture • Uphold the Catholic integrity. • Move from hierarchical to collegiality. • Be a more accepting Church e.g. of those who remarry. • Allow priests to get married. • Create parish ministries aimed at the younger generation. • Create large Catholic events yearly involving our youth. • Accept weekly attendance at Mass on any day of the week, not just Saturday afternoon and Sunday. • Regain the Church's sense of community, hospitality and welcoming. • Explain the meaning of Catholic beliefs and traditions more emphatically and make this knowledge more accessible. Make Catholicity a priority especially when making decisions.
To take responsibility for ourselves and our Church. To acknowledge all the good and bad aspects and be ready to step up and do something about it.
The same as he wants from any Catholic Christian on earth—to build a Church which forms those He chooses, in sincerity and truth, so that they can receive "adult faith" which enables them to live and evangelize according to scripture and Catholic tradition, i.e. to announce the Gospel freely, to live life as part of a community of faith which shows real signs of humility, love and unity for the salvation of all. To witness to the wonders that God does on a constant basis and to encourage anyone who listens, with firsthand knowledge and experience that He can transform our lives on a daily basis and in time, bring us to eternal life.

God is asking us to be courageous in making major changes in the way the Church is structured. Parish life is in tatters and 80% of Catholics do not have a spiritual home. Clericalism must end, the Church must become a Church of humble people, learning how to pray learning how to be community, learning how to confront the secular mindset that is destructive of community with individualism the endemic evil that is now a part of who we are. Women MUST be included at every level of decision-making and priests and bishops must be accountable. We must apologise for the abuse. Facilitate a healing process and then move forward rather than give up. I truly believe the Holy Spirit is powerfully present to us and urging us to make these changes, and NOT GIVE UP.

He must be asking us to look very hard at our faith because with all the issues with the priests at the moment, our patience is wearing very thin. Maybe we need to look at what we want from our priests in today's society. Do we want them to be isolated or do we want them to be part of the community which I think there is a lack of. Maybe if they were able to marry and have children as other religions, they would be able to relate to the community and be part of the parish. I think they have lost touch with the world and something needs to change. We seem to not have enough young men wanting to be priests and soon there will be none. Our parish is still without a priest.

God is asking us to be understanding, for those who are no longer a part of the Church to come back, be involved.

To stop judging others—allow gay marriage, allow priests to marry, stop all the rules / crowd control and look at the true face of God—Jesus. He accepted all, we need to follow his way.

For the Church to keep up with the times. Have moved on so many things that Vatican II instigated. Need to learn and understand and enter the 21st century. Acknowledge Women and change Clericalism. Address Gays, married priests, decision-making... No longer have connection with Society values, particularly the 20 to 40 age group. [-]

To the bishops of Australia. I have been a committed Catholic Woman, Mother and Grandmother. I am appalled and deeply wounded by the betrayal of the Catholic Church of its loyal parishioners. The Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse in Australia has highlighted the appalling treatment of children, young people and vulnerable adults by members of the Catholic clergy. Catholics are struggling to cope with the onslaught of criminal behaviour of convicted Cardinals, bishops and priests and religious clergy. There are possibly thousands of Catholic clergy who are yet to be convicted. The Catholic Church is in an acute crisis of its own making over generations. The shocking abuses of God's children is scandalous and I AM ASHAMED TO BE A CATHOLIC and feel tainted by association, as we too are suffering secondary abuse as parishioners and good Catholic Clergy. GOD is asking us to expose the hypocrisy of the Vatican that has become an all-male exclusive dominion that is so far removed from the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. I am opposed to the medieval male system lost in the pursuit of wealth and power that represents our Catholic Church. The Holy Spirit is asking all of us to band together in prayer and action to seek continual justice for the victims and their families that are known and those who are waiting for justice from the Catholic Church throughout the world. God is asking us to have courage in our thoughts and needs about the future of our Church in Australia. We must

establish a healing and reconciliation process that is open and accountable by the Church, not only for its victims and survivors, but also for all Catholics that have been traumatised by the continual revelations of sexual crimes committed by members of the Catholic clergy. I implore the Catholic bishops to listen to your parishioners. We have been closed out of all decisions concerning our Church and parishes in the past and, our family life. We have been ignored as lay women and men at all levels of Church governance and practice. God is asking you to open your Synod to include equal representation of lay men and women to decide the future of our Church. To stand alone from the Vatican in your decisions and recommendations for changes to Canon Laws that affect the future of our Church ... To recognise that Catholics are turning away in droves, and feel totally alienated by the Church as it is today. There are very few young people in our parishes at Mass and families are feeling alienated and excluded. It must totally rid itself of the scourge of clericalism that has brought the Catholic Church to its knees, throughout the western world. God is asking you as leaders to steer our Church to be more humble, accountable and compassionate. It is asking you, Catholic bishops and clergy, to walk beside us, as Jesus walked, and be courageous in your decisions, with humility, mercy, mutuality and equality for all Australian Catholics.

God is asking us for transparency and reform. He is asking us to learn from the mistakes of the past by bringing the Church into the modern day. He is asking us to bring families together by recognising all members of our family including divorcées and homosexuals. He is asking for priests to be able to be married or partnered. He asking that we make a true apology to victims of sexual assault and their families and to work towards some type of reconciliation. God wants a Church that is renewed and accepting of all. Most of all one which focuses on the true meaning of Jesus Christ being compassion, acceptance and love.

THE CHURCH JESUS CHRIST FOUNDED: We think that God is asking the people of Australia to go back 2,000 years to the Church that Jesus founded, with less emphasis on rules and regulations and more on the commandment "Love one another as I have loved you" There are many passages in the New Testament where Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for being more interested in the importance of keeping the laws. The Pharisees tended to place more importance on this than on gentleness, love, kindness and mercy. THE THIRD RITE OF RECONCILIATION: When some parishes had the Third Rite of Reconciliation the Churches were filled to overflowing—DOESN'T THIS SAY SOMETHING TO THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH that people have spoken as to how they wish to come before Christ to have their sins healed and receive absolution during a community prayer service. Jesus knows what is in everyone's heart, SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? LEADERS NEED TO LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT BY LISTENING TO THEIR people about this issue and many other issues that concern members of the Church—remember, all "GOD'S CHILDREN" includes Lay people as well as the hierarchy. (The Third Rite of Reconciliation is just one example of changes that need to be made if the Church of the future is to flourish).

I pray that God is asking the Australian Church to return to the fundamentals and the foundation of Apostolic Tradition. That it must advocate for the availability of the Extraordinary Form of the Mass across all parishes. That sacred Tradition must not be usurped by a liberal post-modern push to appeal to secularists. That the Church return to the solemnity of Mass, receipt of the Holy Eucharist on the tongue, solemn music, reverence at Holy Mass, defence of our clergy, and a

<p>return to true catechesis to our youths. There is a strong advocacy from youth towards the Traditional celebration of Mass (Latin) and its ancient Gregorian chanting and associated reverence. There appears to be a push to subvert the Clergy and push to disregard ancient Tradition in favour of more secular transformations (marrying/woman priests). There should be a strong focus on praying for the Holy Spirit to guard young men towards the vocation of priesthood. The laity must uphold this vocation and support it. Again, there is a strong push for laity to command parish power over the clergy—this must be refuted.</p>
<p>Reconciliation, focus on family.</p>
<p>To Listen carefully for what is amiss in our Church particularly in our era, in our communities and to ensure there are no barriers to people knowing they are loved by God and welcomed by God.</p>
<p>I firmly believe that since the second Vatican council the Church has strayed too far. So, we should be more prayerful and devoted, particularly during Mass. Proper modest dress has gone out of the window. It should be strongly re-installed. But after the casual approach from the Pastors it will be very difficult. All priests should have training in Public Speaking. I strongly feel that most can't deliver a proper Homily that would grab the attention of the person at Mass. Most read the Homily as if they are reading a Novel or Biography. Most can't take two—three points from the reading and explain it in simple language. I must say I turn off at the Homily if I can't understand the priest. Most should take training from retired bishop— [-] ([-] Diocese.) I love listening to him.</p>
<p>Often when religious communities have chapters they once again delve into the charism of the founder and their history. When lay people do this we look to Christ and our history. It would appear from my understanding that the women in the Early Church were more active. I think that God would expect the Church to investigate ways that women can be more active and recognized as such within the Church. I do not if this is as deacons or priests or something else but the many talents and graces that women possess have not been harnessed by the Church for the good of the People of God. I think God is also asking us to be more merciful to people who are divorced or gay, perhaps on the fringes of the Church and allow a proper dialogue between those groups and the Church. I also think that priests should be relieved of administrative functions and that the principle of subsidiarity should apply.</p>
<p>For his people to go back to Church and apply his teachings.</p>
<p>To care for our kids, and care for the environment.</p>
<p>The topic discussed by this group was how to address the shortage of priests. Other issues raised were: understanding different religions—one God; faith educational opportunities for all ages; women deacons; changes needed in the seminary; starting age of priests; gender inequality; marital status of priests; growth of the individual and the Church; to evangelise the nation and the world; to evangelise through actions not just preaching; to see God in others; to embody Jesus' example; stop talking and act; reconciliation; renewal through acknowledgement of mistakes and reconciliation with those affected; to put Christ at the centre of our Church; regain the trust and faith in our leaders, priests and religious; education; family life (broken families); God is asking us to speak out for the poor, the refugees, the homeless and the disenfranchised; a visible reaching</p>

out to communities—the poor, disadvantaged, in prayer, pastoral and contemplative; welcome and acceptance of where a person is in their journey without judgement; family to come as one; to live Gods love in our everyday lives; love one and other; connect with Jesus again in a personal relationship; develop a sacramental program for parents on the spiritual growth of their kids; feed His sheep; understanding the Catholic faith and , pastoral outreach to schools.

The topic chosen for discussion by the group was: "The Church is not a happy place to go to." This group is heavily involved in outreach programs and do a lot for the community. Some other topics raised were: The third rite of reconciliation would encourage more people to use the sacrament; Old Testament readings at Mass; to embrace English, not Latin especially in hymns as we don't understand what we are singing; make involvement in the liturgy more interesting/user-friendly and available to the laity, especially the youth and young; update the music; we need to sing more modern hymns; Mass is solemn, no happy times; we need a Mass translation that is more in keeping with the way we speak in Australia; be relevant to all people especially the disadvantaged, homeless and also youth; to respect people of all religions and none; to get more involved through prayer and service; homilies must be interesting, relevant, instructive and practical; celibacy should be optional for priests; priests should address social justice issues; to cope with a lack of priests; we need women priests; not enough priests to get personal with their parishioners like previous times; we seem to be being led away from blind faith—there is great disillusionment in the clergy; why do we need male celibate priests; to be open to accepting married priests and deacons; today people are looking for answers, in days gone by people never questioned they just believed; Catholic Church rules—do we follow them to the hilt or not? To be open to the Church accepting divorce; those who are estranged from the Church and sacraments through divorce, etc. be fully included and welcomed; let us return to the basic and most wonderful message of Jesus—love one another; young people's thoughts on the Church, on God and fear; to seek change and pray for the return of lapsed youth and younger married couples; the third rite of reconciliation should be made readily available; we need to modernise for our youth; let us ask, "What would Jesus say?"; let us return to the early Church of the gospel writers—small groups sharing; religion—is it personal?

The topic for this listening and dialogue group was: faith development and evangelisation. Other topics raised were: To be brave; make every opportunity you can to speak to others about your parish community and the joy it brings you; be accepting of peoples differences; to walk in His ways; to pray for us; God wants me/us to care for others as well as self; God wants me/us to tolerate all people, their beliefs, their appearances...; better catechism in our Catholic schools—learn about some of the saints to help as role models; to be reconciled with Him; to be more inclusive; we should go out to people, not waiting for them to come to Church; God is asking us to be strong; God wants me/us to pray daily; more deacons both male and female, single and married; God asks for more priests, religious. Criticism of the Catholic Church regarding the sexual abuse after the parliamentary apology. Perpetrators "Not in Christ." This is the lowest crime; they even have to be protected in gaol.

We must stay together and never give up on our religious beliefs.

I think that God is asking that His Church moves more towards him. That in all our collective actions, words and deeds as a Church, we aim to emulate Christ. In our current state, we need to re-evaluate what it means to move more closely to Christ's line of teaching.
To love each other, no matter what race, no matter your occupation, your sexual preference, your history.
I believe God is asking us to listen with open prayerful hearts with an intent to bring Christ present in all we do—individually and collectively. God is asking [us] to ACT, to repent from structural and cultural sins and bring about change so that our Church is infinitely more compassionate, inclusive, just and courageous in challenging injustice. God is asking us to reimagine what His Church, as His representative on Earth could be and how it should act. He is asking though the Holy Spirit to co-create a Church that honours many of the traditions and beliefs that are still relevant and to modify and proclaim afresh new teachings and understandings reflective of more current theology and divine understanding.
Go is asking us to go back to basics. Treat people the way you would like to be treated. We are all equal.
To allow married men to become priests and ordained priests to marry.
According to Christopher West, "God wants to marry us." It seems to me we have moved away from the emotional encounter God wants to have with us and are more in the head with our systems and procedures. Instead of our weak faith, a full-blown baptism in the fire of the Holy Spirit is what is needed. The personal encounter with Jesus Christ has to be real and deeply felt. The Charismatic renewal and Theology of the Body, which gives insight into the dynamic relationship of the Holy Trinity, the model for family life, give people that experience. Small groups living the gospel, striving to love God with our whole heart and soul and our neighbour as Christ commanded, a deep experiential faith of what it is to be Christian and Catholic and responding to the needs of the society in which we live. Perhaps we should not be so dependent on government money to "run" the Church. The Church should not necessarily be part of the "establishment"; rather it has to be the voice that confronts the wrong. The Truths of our Catholic faith are dynamic and life-changing, the world is hungering for what we have. Let us pray for new zeal and that the fire of the Holy Spirit will fall afresh on the Church in Australia. O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on us.
To be a community of Faith and Justice. A Church with leadership structures/styles that enable members to gather as worshipping Christian communities who have a priority for people who are experiencing spiritual, social or economic hardship. Structures/styles that seek not to control but liberate and enliven members to fulfil our Christian Mission. Structures/styles that enable the Holy Spirit to work freely through all members.
The topic chosen by this group for discussion was Liturgy. Other topics raised were: to be more attentive to others; priests seem to be frightened to talk about social justice issues even when the readings refer to social justice issues; be open to change; be positive to change; upholding respectful traditions of the Catholic faith; to always use English, not to use Latin in parts of the

Mass; the third rite of reconciliation; that the third rite of reconciliation be established across all diocese; more opportunity to attend Latin Mass; all Churches to come together more—more ecumenical; be seen as a greater community interacting together by the wider community; protection of children.

To look after the world we are blessed with. To be present in our lives and be wary of the distractibility of the modern world and how it can impact our families and friendships. To move forward in a shared future with our First Nations people. To apologise and move to heal past trauma for victims of child sexual assault. To take a stand against domestic and family violence by being a force for change in our communities. To shift the dynamic of the Church towards a more inclusive and less patriarchal system, by making the structure of the Church more reflective of the world in which we serve Him.

I think God is asking us to listen to the teachings of Christ and not the distractions, rules and protocols created over time by a 2000-year-old institution run by humans. Too much in the Church focuses on the superficial the irrelevant e.g. 'don't eat meat on Ash Wednesday or Good Friday if your 14-60' – why is that important, why would Christ have made such a rule? The answer is he didn't, the Church did for bizarre reasons. I ask why meat, why not fish, what if you're a vegetarian—it's a nonsense! Too much about the Church are ritual and superficial rules that do not go to the heart of Christ's teaching. I'm reminded of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, we have too many people in the world that follow rules that they think make them good Christians, yet they fundamentally lack good Christian values. And others have fundamentally sound Christian values but feel uselessly guilty about the trivial. Some people say the Church needs to reinvent itself in the modern age I say the Church needs to reinvent itself in Christ for any age. It's that simple. The institution is what's wrong with the Church not the fundamental teachings and we need to scrap rigidity and the power of the institution and return to the word of Christ. This is particularly important today as the authority of the Church has been exposed and compromised by its failings not just in recent times but over millennia. The Church is no better today than the Jewish religion and its Pharisees that Christ ridiculed in his time. God is asking the Church in Australia to wake up and be counted.

I think God is asking us to get real about the crisis we are in, the likes of which haven't been seen since the 16th century. The Church in Australia is afflicted by the same problems being felt in other Western countries: increasingly secular culture, secular governments, secular media, all of these elements growing in hostility towards the Church and people of faith. As the case of Cardinal Pell shows, we can no longer even trust in our justice system. I believe God is asking us to face up to all of this and realise what needs to change, however difficult and painful it may be. Within the bounds of canon law, we must do things differently. Why are our Catholic schools practically factories for unbelief for over 90% of school leavers who never return to Mass again? Why do young people of faith move to Protestant Churches so that they can actually enjoy worship music and dynamic preaching? I know some work is being done to address these things but it is not nearly enough—it must be front and centre. How can we in Australia lead help lead the western Church out of its terrible malaise and alienation from society?

God is asking all of us to be kind, forgiving, respectful, loving and being merciful. God would probably want us all to think about the beautiful world he created for us and in return we have

faith. This is not too much to ask but as humans we can be revengeful and not treat people with respect so we actually do need our faith to be able to continue all the good teachings that Jesus taught us when he was on earth. I'm a wife and mother of six beautiful children blessed by God and I'm respectful and kind to my dear husband. With my children, it's so important that I teach them morals, respect and to always turn to God and ask for help from God. I have all my children christened but still they need to offer their love and commitment to God, otherwise it would be wasted. They go to St Columbkille's school and my two eldest are now in high school. They know that God lives in them and they in God. God loves us all so very much but we are all individuals and we take our own actions. For my family, I want peace, harmony and tranquillity in our home. I could not have become a mother if I did not have faith because my love for God will never diminish. My love for my children is a different love to my love for God and my husband. These little people are my life, my world and my happiness. I will always be the role model for my children and I will always protect them while keeping Jesus in their hearts and minds.

God wants me to be kind to the community. God wants me to love and respect people. And I wish and hope that our faith will continue.

God is asking us to keep him in our hearts, to always talk to him if we need help or just a time to pray. God is also asking us to be loving, kind, caring people to everyone, and to be blessed and keep our faith alive. I trust God and Jesus and all the holy angels/spirits so I hope they always look over me and my family to keep us safe.

He teaches me to be a good boy. I talk to Jesus and he talks to me. He comforts me, he looks after me. I love Jesus so much. I will always trust Jesus.

Love, happiness—I belong to a happy family. I have been blessed by God. God has given me best friends. God wants happiness from the Bible. I pray to God that he blesses me and watches over me and I believe in what heaven does and says.

I think that God is beautiful because he made me and he stands up for what is right. He loves me and I love him and he is the best in the whole world. I love you so much God.

[-] is 13 years old and has permission from his mother, [-], to complete this response. Jesus died to save all human beings from being plagued by sin. He showed us how we can all be better and died showing us that hope is all you need in life. Many dictators and fascists do not follow in this and as a result make their people starve. God endowed us with ten commandments. Right now, I think God desires us to follow these commandments and not argue about politics and let our views isolate and partition us from God's love and faith.

To improve the governance of the Church, to ensure we deliver on our purpose and mission. See attached submission.

God and the Church are asking how can it exist? It seems to be failing and numbers are very low, young people are not attending, Catholics are becoming uninterested. Families attend church only for their children to receive the sacraments so they can attend Catholic schools that are actually financed by the older church-goers. These older people are a dying breed. The Church needs to open up to all people. The Church needs to avoid being judgemental on society when it is committing crimes against society.

God is asking of us to become stewards of creation and to take better care of our planet as well as all those who inhabit it.

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

God is asking us to live, teach and proclaim the TRUTH, UNITY, and JUSTICE through his son JESUS. The TRUTH is JESUS and it is the WAY to CALVARY and the RESURRECTION. The TRUTH of CALVARY is hardship and a selfless giving love that is the core of JESUS THE WAY. We must know the TRUTH (JESUS) and live, teach and proclaim him without fear, hesitation, reason, doubt or discerning. Similarly, UNITY and JUSTICE will only be through JESUS. The WORD (JESUS) transcends all time and space to eternity. Therefore, does not change with the time or space but enlightens it with the GRACE of GOD. Let us not seek to change the TRUTH (WORD/JESUS) but how we live, teach and preach i.e. being CHURCH. We must be intentional in living the TRUTH as it is only then we

will find the WAY to UNITY and JUSTICE. To do this, we must always as the core of our CHURCH and being CATHOLIC empower all to share their God given grace for living our mission of proclaiming the GOOD NEWS. JESUS in his cleansing the Temple in Jerusalem has taught us to be OPEN and WELCOMING TO ALL and not to be THIEVES that only guard the TRUTH for our own. We must OPEN our CHURCH to all the anointed people of GOD so together with the holy orders constituted by JESUS we live, teach and proclaim the TRUTH, UNITY, and JUSTICE through JESUS. The Grace of God has been clearly evident in our women since the beginning through Blessed MARY. We must intentionally use this Grace to strengthen our CHURCH through their participation at all levels. Our parishes must be enlivened to our mission of being intentionally Discipleship and intentionally Apostolic, especially to look outward to bringing the Good News to our wider Communities and to the World. There must be a means of enabling and empowering the share of information throughout the whole Church. This should be strong and clearly evident in the parishes and Dioceses with a culture of openness, especially sharing difficulties and scandals our Church is experiencing. The SEXUAL ABUSE of our Children and Brother and Sisters and NOT the result of CLERICALISM but of SEXUALITY. The majority being Young Boys is due to ACTIVE HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE CLERGY. Our Church in the USA appears to be more open in clearly acknowledging and seeking address of this concern. The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse provides that of those identified 61.8% or 4,756 reported claims in the Catholic Church. We must be OPEN about this our problem and CLEARLY and OPENLY discuss and address this issue of ACTIVE HOMOSEXUALS WITHIN THE CLERGY (amid other failures we must address) in TRUTH, UNITY, and JUSTICE through his son JESUS. Help us, Lord. Save us. Have mercy on us, and keep us all by your grace! AMEN!

The Church needs to be more proactive in going out to people rather than waiting for them to come to us. There should be more catechesis in our Catholic schools.

To have more discussions with our younger generations about where our Church should be going.

I think God is asking the Church to grow up and take responsibility for the past and also for the future—I am very lucky in my home parish to have a priest that is humble and living the faith—but as I attend Mass in other locations and experience clergy through my work, I find that this is not always the case. I am sometimes close to tears as I listen to the homily—I can't believe the ignorance and self-righteousness—I also can't believe sometimes that it is part of the Catholic Faith. As I have got older my faith in God has increased but my frustration with the Church Hierarchy has also increased—we have reached a point that the Church Hierarchy has lost all credibility. It is time to allow the people of the Church to have more influence and input in addressing the wrongs of the past—and building a better Church for the future.

To be a nation of loving and sharing people. For all including our young to have a sense of God and practice Christian values.

To understand our place and time in the salvation story, I have recently begun to read the Bible and am finding the psalms extraordinarily apt for our time and consoling.

God is asking us to trust Our Lady. Our Lady is guiding us into the safety of her Ark. We need to listen to what Our Lady is telling us to do so we will be protected in the upcoming trials of this world.

God would accept ALL people (Catholic and non-Catholic) into his Church. God would welcome ALL with open arms.

Whilst acknowledging the hurt caused by the abuse of clergy, and addressing the steps needed towards preventing such things occurring again, the Church also needs desperately to show what the vast majority of its members are doing to help society and serve God. There is not enough being done to show the numerous Church charitable organisations—e.g. hospitals, support services and education, etc. —it provides both here in Australia and throughout the world and how it gives a voice to those in the poorest of countries. By not getting the message out as to the good the Church and its members perform, the result is that Catholics are just seen to be infested with paedophiles and others who are simply trying to cover it up. The lack of morale amongst the faithful is causing some to leave to other denominations or worse—losing their faith. FURTHERMORE, there needs to be a line drawn against those who fully follow the Catholic Church and her teachings and those who pick and choose what to follow. An example of this is in the ultimate form of child abuse—abortion. This is well known to be against Catholic teachings and a grave sin, and yet we have representatives in parliament calling themselves Catholic who either turn a blind eye or actually support this vile practice. Like Jesus showed us when he drove out the money lenders in the temple that sometimes we must show our disgust and call on all members of the Church, especially those in government, that they cannot present themselves as members of the Catholic Church if they don't follow her teachings.

I believe that God is asking Australians to have Him as the most important person in their lives. He needs us to have Him in our lives daily and not to become caught up in the material, fast paced, superficial aspects of our lives. He wants to remind us that He is our King and that we should not forget Him and push Him aside and only talk to Him when we have time, or need something from Him. He wants us to know that if He is front and centre in our lives our love for Him will grow and spread throughout Australia. He wants us to be strong leaders in the regrowth of His Church throughout the world. He wants us to do this by praying to His mother daily through the rosary, and asking for Her to give us the graces we need to become loving, better people. He wants us to be a strong voice in Australia, and not let us sit by and let laws and practices contrary to His rules in his Catholics Church come to pass without a whimper. He wants to love us and for all Australians to know and love Him.

God has to be asking the Church, particularly its leaders, to "clean the Church's Augean Stables". The widespread child sexual abuse that has been perpetrated, enabled and tolerated by members of the Church has to be cleaned out. The Australian Church has been provided with clear advice on what it has to do to provide redress to victims and to prevent future abuse as far as is possible. As at March 2019, there are still Church bodies that have not agreed to participate in the Commonwealth Redress Scheme. There can be no excuse for not having done so. There has been little action on undertaking measures necessary to protect children, if the silence of the Church leaders on exactly what they have done or not done is an indicator. There are five pillars to ensuring minors are protected in the future—a) identify and remove from Church leadership all

who have committed or enabled offences, b) educate all remaining leaders and people who work with minors in the history and findings of the Royal Commission regarding child abuse, c) educate all minors and laity on what has happened, what to watch for and report on to Church protection bodies and police, d) establish a system in each Church institution on a step-by-step process for reporting and addressing allegations of child abuse, e) end the silence and secrecy of the Church on the abuse problem. Provide a national Church reporting system to publicise to the public the actions taken and not taken on parts a) to d) above, on redress provided and on the extent to which the Royal Commission recommendations have been completed by each Church institution. Do so annually with an announcement on where the advice can be found. If current leaders will not do these things, or continue to display their ambivalence about the crisis they have allowed, they should resign and be replaced by leaders who are resolute in cleaning up the mess and repairing the damage.

1. There needs to be a concerted effort to bring together the two factions of conservative and liberal Catholics under stronger episcopal leadership that has credibility. 2. This requires episcopal leadership to act collegially among themselves and collaboratively with clergy and laity. 3. There needs to be a serious review of the extravagance of the Church bureaucracies which appear to be making work for themselves at great expense while there is a dearth of resources at the parish level. 4. There is Massive inequality between the resources of the major archdioceses and the rural Church which ought to be examined and remedied. 5. The Massive investment in Catholic schools is simply not producing thinking and faith-filled young people. Teachers are timid and caught up in the current secular culture and appear to lack the resources of good faith formation and hence are not able to pass this on to their pupils. 6. Serious consideration should be given to bringing the sacraments of initiation of Eucharist and confirmation together but at an older age for both (e.g. final year of primary school) so that the catechetical opportunity for both children and parents is maximised while retaining the theological integrity of initiation. This should be uniform across all dioceses. 7. There should be serious consideration of reworking the diocesan boundaries which have historical origins quite out of step with modern demographics. 8. There should be a rationalisation of Church fundraising along the lines of the document produced by the USCCB <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/canon-law/complementary-norms/canon-1262-fundraising-appeals.cfm>. 9. There should be a policy adopted by the ACBC with respect to public policy advocacy so that it is clear who has authority to speak publicly on matters of social policy, to avoid the confusion that is evident when disparate voices send different messages (as happened, for example, in the debates about federal funding of schools). 10. There should be a major national Catholic media presence rather than the few diocesan based weekly or monthly journals that is well resourced and credible and open to a variety of opinions so that it will be informative for the Catholic community but taken seriously by secular commentators. This could happen by expanding CathNews to include original content. 11. The scandal of depriving small isolated communities of the Eucharist because of the lack of priests should be addressed by supporting the ordination of "viri probati". 12. All parishes should be required to have a pastoral council as well as a finance council. 13. All dioceses should be required to have a pastoral council as well as a finance council. 14. All members of pastoral and finance Council should be suitably inducted with a basic exposure to fundamental Catholic ecclesiology.

They should have an opportunity for ongoing faith formation. 15. There should be a rationalisation of tertiary theological education.

Please see attached documents.

To provide more embracing, compassionate and loving care to our youth. The rates of depression and anxiety among youth are alarming, and a strong faith and supportive community can really help people dealing with those illnesses.

To connect more strongly to, and show greater respect to, the first nations people in Australia. To be more open to the faith and faith practices of our first nations people, and integrate some of these practices into our own practice of faith in our country. To be open to first nations' teaching on caring for our environment. To publicly apologise to our first nations peoples for our role in the Stolen Generations and other 'white Australia policy' practices that did not respect their long connection to this place and deep knowledge of the Spirit in this land.

To be very active in caring for our environment—a gift from God, for which we have not been very good stewards. To speak out as a Church, publicly and to our governments, about our environment. The Church seems to have been very quiet on this front since *Laudato Si'* was published. To ensure our practices and teachings are consistent with good stewardship of our world, as instructed in Genesis. This means actively caring for and protecting the earth, practicing sustainability, wise use of resources and aiming for balance with the earth, rather than submitting it to the will of humans and 'progress'. God gave us this good earth and we disrespect His generosity and love if we mistreat our planet.

On the question of divorce: as a priest, what has disturbed me the most has been situations where one spouse (usually but not always the man) has simply abandoned their partner, for another partner—and pursued the other relationship beyond the possibility of healing of the marriage. Such behaviour in itself reveals the lack of capacity of the unfaithful partner to have entered into the sacrament of Marriage (or valid marriage of any kind). It would make a huge practical difference if the Church could provide a pastoral response in such cases by which the abandoned partner is given a much easier path to annulment than usual. Often the abandoned partner is understandably hesitant to pursue a mysterious process by which they feel they would need to contact their ex (who may also have been abusive) or talk deeply about their past hurts ... It is a sin of omission for the Church to have failed to provide more proactive care in such situations, including making annulment processes easier, and especially accessible, for faithful and abandoned Catholic partners to marriage.

Clergy and laity need to be educated about Catholic ecclesiology. In any organization, frustration arises when roles are not clear. The Church is currently struggling on every level with a confusion of roles. Problems such as rightly understanding "empowerment of the laity"; rightly understanding the reasons for male-only priesthood; rightly understanding the very reason for a hierarchical Church in the first place (in a society so explicitly egalitarian as Australia). The first step towards unity of purpose and mission is a renewed theological formation for all (CLERGY AND

LAITY), including dialectical workshops and apologetics—drawing upon rich documents such as that of Pope Paul VI on the Apostolate of the laity, Inter Insigniores on the question of women's ordination, Christifideles Laici, various Vatican II documents etc. The lack of formation so far is an indictment on the teachers of the Church (bishops especially) but it is not too late to correct this.

For all to come back to prayer and confession. The priests need to be formulated much, much better, they need to speak on immorality, abortion, same sex marriage. Sin in general. Communion on the tongue and kneeling. Women and girls should not be assisting at Mass. Since Vatican II, we have lost reverence for the Holy Eucharist. Why aren't you teaching reverence for The Host? We see the congregation walk willy-nilly down the aisle for Holy Communion and walk back the same way. Why did The Saint Michael Prayer been stopped after Mass? Why doesn't the priest start the sign of peace and each person give the next one the sign of peace instead of the distraction that is happening now?

We feel God is urging us to speak out, to be prophetic, and to suggest that it is now time for the hierarchical Church to be transformed; to change to a listening, collaborative Church which treats all the faithful as equal. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, and for the sake of all who believe in justice. We are making this submission as one last desperate cry for change!

Keep Australia Christian ... and rebuild the respect of Fathers in society.

The depth of hurt to the laity by clerical child abuse has not been understood nor adequately addressed. There is still continuing mistrust. New rules may be in place to prevent this in future but a method to help heal the laity is yet to be found. It still HURTS.

To evangelise the Nation, to speak out for the poor, the refugees and the disenfranchised. To be an active faith community.

The Catholic Church is dying in the 'bush'. The priests are so low on numbers, that Mass is now a monthly event, instead of the traditional Saturday evening/Sunday morning. Country priests now have to travel for hours to celebrate Mass; therefore, fatigue and loneliness increase. Many country priests are also known to be heavy drinkers—again an unnecessary element that is plaguing these men. I would think due to loneliness.

God wants us to do His holy will, obey His commandments and be faithful to Him. We are sheep who need the shepherd, the sheep cannot tell the shepherd what to do. We must bring back traditions. Remembering Friday as a day of penance. We must always do what God wants us to do, not what men want us to do. God is in control, we are not. We must stop offending God because there are too many offences: fornication, abortion, sexual perversion, etc. etc. etc. We must amend our life, repent of our sins and surrender totally to God, follow God and do His holy will. We also must be reverent when we attend Holy Mass, remembering that we are in God's House and He wants to hear our heart speak to Him with awe, silent and modestly dressed. God wants us to love Him and love our neighbour and we have to help others to do God's will. If we really, truly want to do His holy will, He will surely help us, because God loves us so much and He can do all things. May God abundantly bless us with the Holy Spirit, with our heart full with joy, love, wisdom and perseverance to do His holy will every day of our life. Amen.

That the Church in Australia fully implements the 1965 Vatican II Decree on bishops (Christus Dominus, par 27) in the full spirit (as was intended) and develop it to recognise the specific cultural needs of the Church in Australia.
Just attended the first gathering of Plenary 2020. I liked some of the suggestions put forward, as well disappointed with others. Yes, like the rest of the world we are also evolving and need changes BUT some of the fundamental things should remain unchanged. I find we have lost respect for the house of God. The meaningful way? Am I here at Mass? There is so much talking in Church. I would like to walk in and find a peaceful quietness, to be able to focus and prepare for what is about to occur. To celebrate Mass, to hear the 'WORD' of God and most of all the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ. I find talking in Church SO!! disrespectful to the house of God and to each other. We lose sight of the reason we are there. We as a community should understand the difference of BEING in the Church and 'BEING' of the Church. E.g. Mary and Martha. Mary spent time listening to Jesus. Martha on the other hand spent time fussing over petty things, 'losing sight', too much fussing, not enough listening. My other point is in our Diocese we have some extremely hardworking GOOD priests, but some should not be there. They're arrogant and self-serving. Should not be left in one parish for a long period of time (like 15 years or so, too long). ALSO, the bishop should be a pastor to the Diocese, to show leadership, to communicate and guide his priests to the utmost of his ability. If he can't do that, he shouldn't occupy the office and chair of bishop.
Why are so few young people going to Church and why is there no Catholic high school in [-]?
I believe that religious education in our Catholic schools, especially Catholic high schools, needs to have more apologetics and catechesis. It needs to give more reasons for the faith and hope that is within us. It needs to teach the richness of the faith, and the lives of saints that the students can relate to. It needs to teach the evidence for Jesus and the Bible in history and archaeology. It should entertain and encourage students, not be boring.
Our Church Community is everything to us, if we continue the way we are, what will happen with no priests? What about confession?
Charismatic revival.
As someone who is a long term, 'cradle Catholic' I still desire our Eucharistic celebrations to be vibrant, meaningful, relevant and responsive to the needs and issues of our time. This means good music, homilies and hospitality. I was struck by the following article about why young people tend not to go to Mass. It can be found at https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-23/im-a-millennial-and-Catholic/10634948 . Thanks.
I believe that God is asking the LAITY of Church-going Catholics to step up and take a bigger role within the Church hierarchy. Clericalism over the past century has not done the Catholic Church in Australia any favours, and people are leaving the Church in droves. Something needs to change, and it needs to change NOW.
To rescue his Church from shameful irrelevance.

Why is it that the Church does not lead to encourage us to have a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ? I only hear about this once a year in a homily.

Listen to our children. Make the Mass more appropriate in language for our children. Encourage the families more to feel comfortable to attend Mass with the children. Have women in more prominent roles. Have Reconciliation of the Third Rite. Have more children-friendly readings. Have stronger procedures to keep all forms of abuse out of our churches.

The Catholic Churches are mainly attended by older people. What can be done to attract the younger generations? The Church must be more flexible, welcoming and more inclusive of all ages, genders, cultural backgrounds. The Mass is too conventional and often boring. A lot depends on the priest. The parish priest's autonomy should be shared by a parish council, elected by parishioners. If a parish is lucky enough to have religious sisters they also should have much more autonomy in the decision-making of running a good parish, where people are welcome and included. Women should be able to become deacons. Priests should be allowed to marry. There is a huge shortage of priests. It would be great to see priests from other countries, such as Vietnam or Africa. Australian society needs missionaries here!

Conversion of heart based on prayer, reading and reflection on the Gospel story; participation in a worshipping (Eucharistic) community; active collaboration in the work of God's kingdom of justice and peace in the here and now, in hope for the well-being of future generations and in our promised life to come; openness to an evolving understanding of our faith in the light of new scientific knowledge and increased understanding of human behaviour and society at large.

• Plenary Council 2020 Discussion. • In response to Question 1, 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?' the following points were made—• That the selection and training of priests be extensively reviewed and improved, in light of the findings of the Royal Commission. This would include assessing the individual's maturity, life skills and experience. This assessment, by both lay and religious, should continue throughout their priestly life, allowing a continuous review of their role and their continued suitability for the priesthood. • That we have married clergy, given that ministers from other denominations who convert to Catholicism are permitted to remain married. • That we allow females to become priests. • That priests and religious who decide to marry are welcomed into the Church. • That lay, married people, both male and female, are able to join the priesthood. • That there be obligatory reporting of serious offences by the clergy and the Laity. Absolution to be conditional on the offender's reporting their offences to police. • That we explore new and contemporary ways to engage youth in liturgies and the practise of their Faith.

Amid the crises of the sexual abuse allegations and convictions against the clergy—be transparent! How many more clergy are in the Church today that are committing these crimes? Church leadership with the authority to make decisions should include lay people. Not only the parish priest. Expenditure of capital nature, i.e. strategic building works, master plans/DAs, etc. should be discussed with the parish and a mandate obtained from the parishioners BEFORE decisions are made. This may involve several sessions. Else how do you receive buy in? The process to appoint contractors should be via a tender process open to probity. It is not enough to TELL members of finance/parish council what you intend doing. Else why do you have these sitting

on the councils? To merely meet Canon Law requirements? Staff should be appointed after an open advertising process. Parish priest as Christ' chosen should serve the community! Not run parish as though parishioners do not count and then expect parishioners to follow when decisions are made without them. Why do you think Church attendance thus income is so low? We need renewal and a fresh clean way of evangelising. Include elected lay people to help in leading the Church. Listen to repeated requests from parishioners—for what they want or suggestions they make.

I believe, God is asking us, Catholics of Australia, to be more vigilant at the same resilient to the growing changes in our social and cultural demographics. We are slowly becoming a minority in our way of life and faith and we feel besieged by this. WE now need more of God's grace and love to give us the strength to be bolder in standing our ground and be more engaging with those who question our faith in a loving and gentle manner. Live our lives as true Christian in words and deeds.

For the bishops to change their way of governing ... and to allow a representative group of God's faithful to have voting rights at the ACBC

To be a collegial and synodal Church one that is inclusive, especially of women, those described as 'intrinsically disordered', and other people such as divorced and civilly remarried couples who are denied Eucharistic hospitality. In the latter case Chapter 8 of *Amoris Laetitia* needs to be examined closely and implemented pastorally. In the case of those judged as "intrinsically disordered" (this descriptor found in the Catholic Catechism, especially in view of contemporary medical and psychological insights is an evil description). For the parishes together, with their priest and lay leaders, to implement certain 'pastoral advantage' changes before the 2020 Plenary council convenes. For example, healing and reconciliation services for Catholics who have been badly wounded in various ways by Church personnel and teaching (e.g. sacrilegious weddings for mixed marriages; women who have had an abortion and who were condemned by certain priests; others who have been refused the Eucharist as the medicine of mercy. There is need to use inclusive language in the liturgy and for the Eucharistic prayers for children to be adopted more widely and freely. Young couples who wish to be married outdoors (in God's creation!) should be allowed to do so without additional paper. Surely priest within a parish can have delegated authority from the local ordinary to conduct such weddings.

For the bishops to exercise courageous leadership and not be paranoid about Rome; Pope Francis wants us to be a collegial and synodal Church.

Pope Francis says that Without the Eucharist, everything the Church does is vain. Our Church must be open to re-imagine who and at what age people can be ordained as priest. No longer can the Church argue along gender lines in relation to conferring the sacrament of Holy orders. Given the status of the immaculate One, Mary the Mother of Jesus, and of St Mary Magdalene as the Apostle to the Apostles, it's time for our Church to enter the third millennium and stop arguing for maintaining the status quo in relation to ordaining women and to denying people especially those in remote areas of Australia, the Eucharist. The notion that overseas priests can stop gap the

current crisis in priestly numbers is untenable. There is more than enough evidence to suggest that priests coming from overseas are more needed in their own countries (it's a justice issue) and that their integration into Australian culture is not working. In many instances, these overseas priests are destroying the work done by Australian born priests to promote lay leadership by bringing their clericalism and their cultural mores. Too many of these immigrant priests treat women as second-class citizens and see themselves as set apart. This is not to deny the goodness and noble intentions of these men. Whilst ever this naiveté is allowed to run its course, bishops are simply band aiding a situation and have done so for decades—to their shame. I believe God is asking us to expand our horizons in terms of the sacrament of holy orders and to remind ourselves that amongst Jesus' inner circle there were various women who played a vital role in spreading the gospel.

To be a more inclusive Church and to invite people, who are considered intrinsically disordered (what an evil descriptor; the Catholic Catechism need to be changed—Pope Francis has already denounced such language but sadly has not yet moved to eradicate it). Suitable women who are the foundation stones of our Church need to be ordained deacon and priest. The male, clerical club needs to be exorcised.

For representatives of the whole people of God to have a deliberative vote at the ACBC ... in other words, the governance of our Church must change and thus Canon Law must change ... our Church does not belong to male, supposedly celibate clergy and ageing ones at that as much as many of these people are holy ... young people, women, and others look at the RC Church and laugh at our anachronistic and unjust practices.

To increase our discernment at individual, Church and broader community levels. That the Church engages with and supports the believers and the broader community more extensively through a funded lay apostolate that undertakes ministries that mirror the spirit of service evident in the founding communities of the Church and resulted in sponsorship of faith leaders. For the Church to offer a vision of a just world to the broader community that consist of actions for the community to adopt over a horizon beyond the electoral cycle offered by the current political system ... These would seek a world of increase justice and equity and care for God's non-human creation.

This is a bit poetic, but out of broken things life comes: wheat comes from broken seeds and rain comes from broken clouds. I think in our brokenness God will bring forth life, but we need to pray and listen to what that life will be. What it can't be is what we are doing now. There is a great movement for significant change in a whole range of areas and what they are needs to be carefully discerned.

To be completely honest and transparent in all matters, to sincerely respect and listen to the ordinary people who are the Church. To pray for guidance in all matters concerning future and present clergy and their roles as representatives of Christ. They need to have genuine loyalty and respect for the people, and to be mindful of Christ's expectations of his clergy, regardless of their status within the Church. Some humility would be appreciated by the people who are the Church.

I think that God is seeking for us to recognise the blessings we have in our lucky country, and to recognise God's love and beauty in all of our brothers and sisters. In a time of significant change and technological progress, we must uphold the value of unconditional love, forgiveness, prayer, and the power of silence. I believe it is us, as Christians and Catholics, who should lead by example in how we treat others and how we advocate for those marginalised in our society, just as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us. Sadly, many of my friends and colleagues make off-the-cuff comments occasionally about how the Church and the Scriptures hold no relevance in today's age. In my opinion, this cannot be further from the truth. In today's constant news cycle and bombardment of social media, the tenets of the Gospel are more important than ever to ensure that we never lose sight of each other as children of God. As a young adult, I want to proudly proclaim the good news of God through my actions. The Church must be centred upon the fundamental principles laid out by Christ. We must treat all people with the dignity and love that our Lord has espoused. This is our mission, and we need to stay focussed on this. It is critical that the Church re-establishes trust within the community, and to better communicate our faith i.e. to show the deep, underlying principles founded on love and virtue, rather than just seeming like an imposition of rules.

Courage to face change, to be honest, brave and critical of 'traditions' which have been added since the time of Jesus, and which no longer serve useful purpose 2000 years on.

<https://www.abc.net.au/qanda/2019-04-03/10838558>

We as a Church are being called to conversion, to a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ and a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit on an individual level and as communities of faith. We cannot do this in our own strength but only in the power of the Holy Spirit. When we are transformed from within, amazing works of charity and social justice will follow. Pentecost transformed the apostles from frightened individuals to people who boldly lived out their faith even to the point of death. We need that Pentecost experience to live the Gospel in our secular society.

I believe he is saying to the Church to look at how we can get young people and young families to get involved in the Church. Young people need to be given a chance by the Church getting involved, by putting things on i.e.: movie passes with others, etc. Speak to people from the pulpit not for 15 to 20 minutes as they turn off, give the people something to think about. Our future is the young people in the Church ... I don't know how we get them there but we need to think outside the box. I also think priest should be able to get married, or our God's Church will die as it is doing now. Churches are empty in the West, come on.

Change the power structure of the leadership of the Church to make leaders more accountable. Open the door to a broader membership of priesthood and bishop to include women. Accountability at all levels with audits of financials and abuses of power. Internal Church ombudsman manned by laity (Francis Sullivan type qualities). Open the Church's coffers and pay out compensation to victims of sex abuse.

We are asked to maintain our belief in God. To be inclusive and tolerant and to see God in all others, albeit very difficult at times. We must have more women in decision-making roles to

balance and offer a more gentle view. We need to empower both men and women who stand up for roles of leadership and keep them accountable to the ways of a higher self.

Our parish has embraced the opportunities that have come with the invitation to be part of the process of preparing for the Plenary Council 2020. It has been a real moment of grace for us as we shared our hopes and dreams and our concerns for the future of the Church in Australia. If our parish is anything to go by, there will be many valuable submissions to consider at the Plenary Council 2020. There is one submission I hope will be taken seriously; it is that the process of consultation and dialogue that we have just experienced will become an important part of the way the Church in Australia continues into the future. With all due respect to the hierarchy of the Church in Australia, if our Church is to continue to be a relevant and effective means of proclaiming the Good News in our world, we need the contribution of lay people in decision-making and leadership at all levels. Plenary Councils should also occur on a regular basis—perhaps every decade.

To stay with the Church, even in times of declining numbers at Mass and persecution. And to know the true meaning of being Catholic, and to pray every day.

The Church is the people. How can lay people have a larger influence within the Church in all areas including culture, parish involvement, decision-making, the Mass and sacraments?

• The full intent of Vatican II must be implemented in the Church in Australia. The laity are fundamental to the future of the Church and without effective parish Councils the Church has no future in the modern world! The purpose of Vatican II which is still ongoing was to drag the Catholic Church, kicking and screaming into the modern era but all too often it is still stuck in the past, bogged down in the black soil of history. • The only hope is that Christ himself was discredited and came back from the dead! Christianity will have to do the same, but its resurrection would not be as dramatic and because of its errors, will not be anyway miraculous, but a long hard road, to regain credibility, which can only be done through genuine reform, consistency and hard work with its general constituency where parish Councils will be vital and essential.

1. All Christians have the great privilege, joy and responsibility of evangelisation bringing people to know and love Jesus. Hence all Christians need to have a deep personal relationship with Jesus the Word revealed through both Scripture and Tradition. Hence, we need to encourage all of the Faithful to be as informed as possible for the call by Jesus to evangelisation. To facilitate this objective, it would be good if all parishes used suitable teaching materials and aids to do this. Suitable teaching aids would be Bishop Barron DVD's on Catholicism and the writings of Scott Hahn. 2. In our work of evangelisation all Christians need to be able to answer the following questions. How can we share the truth that Jesus is the unique Son of God and saviour of the world? What evidence is there for his life, death and resurrection? What is a miracle and why did Jesus work miracles? How does science assist a Christian to deepen his/her faith in God? Christians need to discuss the answers to these questions. They will be found in the Archdiocese of Sydney CCD program Christ our Light and Life given in Years 11 and 12 lessons for the State school apostolate. 3. Love of the Eucharist must be number one priority for all Catholics. Much greater input on the Eucharist needs to be given at all levels of evangelisation where needed—

from the pulpit, teaching in Catholic schools, sacramental programs, the RCIA, Summer schools where needed. Also, it is important to include in the program for all Catholic schools regular worship of Jesus through adoration of the Blessed sacrament and Benediction, having adoration every two weeks and Benediction once a month. The students could learn beautiful hymns for both of these times of prayer. Beautiful reflections could be used to help the students understand Jesus' real present in the sacred host. The rosary could also be recited before the Blessed Eucharist or at least part of it using a Scripture rosary. Good in-servicing would be essential to make the above a reality. 4. Australian Catholic bishops could organise for a DVD to be made on the Holy Eucharist for use by catechists in their State school apostolate and for all teachers in Catholic schools. One could be made on Benediction as well. 5. Promote the pro-life movement. Encourage all parishioners to join a pro-life group. A pro-life group would:

- Pray for and care for marginalised people, people who have a handicap, people with a mental illness and the unborn.
- Pray for all expectant parents.
- Support women having difficulty in their pregnancies.
- Through an appropriate liturgy or Mass, present to God the Most High all unborn babies who have died before birth; precious still born babies, those who die through miscarriage and all aborted babies asking God to hold them in the palm of His hand.
- Attend pro-life pilgrimages and gatherings, for example joining with the Cross Roads young people as they journey from Brisbane to Melbourne usually in the months of J...

To reform the Catholic Church into something that meets the 21st century.

We need an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ.

For the Church to a credible and faithful voice in the public arena.

God is asking us to have the fortitude and wisdom to instigate radical change in the Catholic Church to make it more relevant to people in today's society. The Catholic Church needs to be inclusive, not exclusive—it needs to re-focus on what Jesus said and did and follow his example.

Openness of Church Leaders.

To focus on Eucharist and devotion.

My wife and I are and have always have been practicing Catholics. We were brought up in this faith, as were our parents, grandparents and beyond. We feel privileged and blessed to be bringing up 5 children (ages 4-14) in this same faith and we hope and pray that they will remain strong and active members of the Church. Our lives are busy as we both work 2 jobs. We have been blessed greatly with our skills and talents. We are actively involved in our parish in many ministries, as are our children. We have always been open to life and committed to the Church's teaching on Natural Family Planning, despite not knowing many other couples our age committed to this in their marriage. During the course of our marriage (15 years), we have welcomed our 5 children and suffered 6 miscarriages, with the most recent miscarriage occurring through Christmas 2018. This was not a planned pregnancy, and with the struggles of our already large family, found the news of our pregnancy very difficult to cope with. Of course, we would have welcomed this baby with love, but our feelings were initially a mix of shock, dread, fear, and disbelief. At times through our marriage, we have felt really challenged as a couple by Natural Family Planning (NFP), and at times didn't feel it was unifying us as a couple. Following this most

<p>recent miscarriage, our feelings and thoughts on our reproductive future have been significantly altered. We no longer feel we can live with the fear of falling pregnant, and either risking another miscarriage, or the significant stress associated with having another child to care for. By this stress, we mean not just financial pressure, but the emotional and mental pressure of caring for another child, as well as the impact on our 5 children. We know some big families and have seen that the parent's attention for their children is spread thin to say the least—we feel this with 5! This is not to say we/they love them less, but living in this day and age, a parent needs to be so much more attuned, available and educative for their children. We want to be able to commit to our children and give them the best practical and moral upbringing that we can. We feel the Church's teaching on reproductive health, which is something we have committed to for our whole married life, for us, is no longer possible. We really feel that we have discerned this at great length as a couple—this is not a decision that has been taken lightly, or for our own benefit or advantage. We truly feel our decision to use some form of contraception is in the interest of caring for the 5 wonderful children that we already have. We can't quite express what we feel God is asking of the Church in Australia. We definitely don't believe that contraception is something that should be available or encouraged by the Church. But we feel there needs to be some flexibility in the teaching of the Church—in the interest of the children of large families and the health of the mother.</p>
<p>For both male and females to have equal standing and opportunities in the Church.</p>
<p>Openness of Church Leaders.</p>
<p>To be a voice for Catholic beliefs.</p>
<p>God is asking for fairness and equality to demonstrate love, peace and unity amongst all human beings—male AND female.</p>
<p>Married Clergy.</p>
<p>REGARDING CODE OF CANON LAW: Is this present CODE OF CANON LAW somewhat OUTDATED. Would it be considered by Council to review it and place this issue on Council agenda. More inclusive especially with divorced Catholics.</p>
<p>To have more open dialogue as a Church/people with each other. To have more together time for prayer and Bible. To be organized and open to sharing more with those who are in need.</p>
<p>I would like to see us remaining true to the faith and maintaining the integrity of the Catholic faith. My worry is that we are trying to please everyone and 'accept' people for who they are by changing the faith to say that everyone's lifestyle and decisions are acceptable. It is okay to have different lifestyles and ways of living but I don't see why the Church should have to change because of other people. It should be that we accept that we all have different values and different ways of seeing the world. The Catholic faith should not have to change just because people want to live a different way to what the Catholic Church teaches. I worry that in 2, 3 or 4 hundred years' time that the Catholic faith will look nothing like what it is today because we are trying to be politically correct and make everyone happy. If we are to accept other people, why are other people not expecting to accept that Catholics have different values to them? I think we</p>

need to maintain the standards, teachings and integrity of the faith, otherwise you may as well give it a different name.

The events of the past week have offered light and clarity. God is asking us to tear down the layers of patriarchy, hypocrisy, dishonesty, clericalism, abuse, wealth and discrimination, to clear out the temple and find the core of Christianity and Catholicism. It is still there in the good bishops and priests and in the faithful laity who have willingly supported the Church financially and spiritually. Many young Catholics have lost faith and trust in the Church, but they and their children are the future. Despite the good clergy, the actions of the abusers and the hierarchy who protected or turned a blind eye have changed the Church irrevocably for many Catholics, practising or not. What we believe God wants for the Church now is radical change, genuine contrition, and consideration of the following: Patriarchal hierarchy: The sense of clerical entitlement at all levels must be removed. Inversion of the current structure, developed as a means of power and control, is needed to recognise the people, not the hierarchy, as the Church; lay leadership must be respected and acknowledged. Lack of transparency: The evidence and findings of the Royal Commission have exposed the general reluctance of Church leadership to accept responsibility. Offenders have been protected by the Church and particularly the Vatican. Civil law **MUST** override Church law in order to protect the vulnerable. **ANY** religious under suspicion need to face the charges with honesty and humility. Place of women: Women have been deliberately restricted. It is critical to open up opportunities for women priests, deacons, and acolytes, not simply use them as support staff—as readers, catechists, flower arrangers, vestment launderers and church cleaners, while telling them patronisingly how valuable they are. This will no longer work. The only Australian saint is a woman who had to fight the hierarchy to provide for children and the poor. Consequently, she was excommunicated for ‘disobedience’ to threatened power-bearers. ‘Mother Church’ is not its leaders, it is not male, and you will kill it if you do not quickly endorse positions of authority for already qualified women (lay and religious). The leadership should reflect the wider Church. Determination of suitable candidates for the priesthood: How are candidates chosen? How are they vetted? How stringent is their supervision? How relevant is their training to prepare them for their work in a changed world? Are we taking priests from overseas, whose cultures and world views are radically different from ours, because we cannot attract single males in Australia? Most Catholics would welcome married and/or female priests. Celibacy should be voluntary, not mandatory. We hold to our faith not because of the hierarchy but despite it, because we have hope for major and lasting change. If this is not forthcoming, the Church as it stands offers the laity in Australia very little, and the faithful will continue to leave.

The Church needs to change to relate better to the modern world in Australia. It must restate its beliefs in ways that are relevant to modern people. It needs to re-evaluate its inclusion of women as it moves from a patriarchal and hierarchical organisation to a more inclusive and democratic community.

The Church comprises religious and laity, all with their own humanity and hence, their own ways of dealing with the events in the world and the Church. Good intentions that set people on their faith journey may be changed over time by experiences, some positive and some not. The lucky ones find their faith life uplifting and fulfilling. Similarly, the pressures and stress of situations and dealing with people may erode faith life satisfaction. Things will go wrong. People will make

mistakes. Some people seem hard to love. A situation may in essence be blameless. If a Church member is under immense stress and just needs support, either short or long-term, to deal with personal issues, then in both corporate and Church situations, a good motto is “No Surprises”. Cover ups, failures to communicate early, openly and honestly, doing nothing or worse still, denying that a problem exists always come back to bite you later on. The truth will always come out eventually. Then, even those who did no more than facilitate the cover up will get swept up with those at the core of the situation and be showered with blame. Failure to communicate, albeit with great short-term intentions or rationalisation, just generates rumours, speculation and even ridicule, especially when there’s general knowledge that a problem exists or when a remedy is applied without explanation that obviously relates to the situation. I think God would want the Church to be more accepting that things in the life of the Church and its members can go off the rails. But, it’s then that the Church needs to rely on the people to accept we’re all human, to admit to the errors, accept responsibility, seek forgiveness from the Church members, involve the correct authorities and then work together to fix problems, even if that involves painful sanctions.

God would want the Church to listen to the input from parishioners, set aside political and personal impediments to their decision-making and to accept and implement changes on merit in a timely manner, especially when the changes are intended to reduce their workloads.

PRAY ALWAYS—spend time with Me: open your heart to Me; pray not just in words; be silent; be still; listen to Me; follow Me—Christ, the truth and the Way; surrender, work with Me My love is for everyone. All are equal in my sight. Love one another—Be compassionate ‘No one is to be excluded from the ‘feast’. Bear with the weakness of one another. Be merciful; forgive. Listen to all others in the world; reach out beyond your horizons. Be peace—respect the dignity of all people—no matter their faith, race, gender.... Be humble and true.

To focus on spiritual development, move beyond bland traditional interpretations of the Gospels. Interpretations that are often handed down in unenthusiastic homilies that leaves us without any great inspiration from week to week. We need to look carefully at who is appointed to parish priest (given we have such a shortage) some people who have assumed this role have done so with an exceptionally authoritarian method. This leaves many, including our youth disengaged and feeling consistently judged and at times even fearful of prospective responses from our priests. We need to be aware of the aging population within our Churches. Most often Mass is a sea of grey hair. We need to offer services that are traditional and meet their needs, yet also offer other services that are uplifting, have music that is engaging and upbeat and encourages the youth to engage in readings/general participation. We need to be more inclusive of all people, regardless of gender, marital status (married/single/divorced) or sexuality (including all members of the LGBTI community). Further, I believe there is significant need in Australia for women (both lay and nuns) to have a more significant role within the Church—allow female priests. I also believe that there is significant opportunity for priests to be allowed to marry. This would further bring the weekly homilies to a place that holds greater common ground and given recent events in Australia regarding historical crimes, I feel this may well be critical. I believe God is asking for us to consider the current state of the environment and take active steps to be stewards.

We believe that what God is asking of us in Australia currently is to stay true to His teaching through His living Word in the Bible. God does not change. People thirst for the truth, God's truth, not men's and in order to deliver that truth, there is a great need for shepherds to walk, with a good spirit of prayer and of discernment, on the footsteps of Jesus Christ. What God is asking of us in Australia, as we are blessed by its geographic location, is to make a difference to the world, by example. We explain: When tragedies happen, here or overseas, when threatened by natural disasters, when faced with unnatural and diabolic laws or bill to pass (bills that are not for the good of people are not of God), the whole Catholic Church, at the prompting of bishops and parish priests, should kneel and come together as One Family to pray the Holy Rosary: the simplest perhaps but most efficient weapon to conquer all adversities. At this time, God is asking of us in Australia, to consecrate this beautiful land and all its inhabitants to the Holy Family. It is the only way to bring back family values and respect of life, it is also the only way that our country can be spared from calamities. It is the only way that we, though many, are one. We are Australia, unique and so loved by Our Lady.

The Holy Spirit is saying that the clerical hierarchy of the Australian Catholic Church has failed to listen to the sense of the faithful in grievous matters relating to the marginalised and the poor, especially victims of abuse at the hands of the Church itself. The Holy Spirit is pleading with the clerical hierarchy of the Church in Australia to repent of its errors and to root out the corruption within the clerical culture that has promoted pomposity and hypocrisy among clerics, which has led to various forms of abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the betrayal of large numbers of the faithful. The cure to this corrupted clerical culture is the restoration of power to the People of God through the establishment of permanent Synodal structures of accountability to the whole People of God—clergy and lay. Synodal structures would be required wherever clergy are appointed to Church leadership positions. In the Church in Australia, governing structures comprising clergy and lay would be needed at the National Conference level, the Metropolitan level, the Diocesan level and the parish level. Models of contemporary Synodal structures with deliberative power in the hands of both clergy and lay exist within the Anglican Communion in Australia and within other Churches around the world.

To focus on teaching children (age 3-18 years) the new catechism, and stories of the saints. Otherwise there will be no vocations to priesthood, religious life, or sacramental marriages.

God is asking us to address the shortage of priests and to look to the other Christian Churches for solutions.

At this time God is asking of us to do everything possible to create an ever-lasting Church in his name. Building on the pass, not losing our identity and doctrines, we must find novel ways in making God's Church relevant again in the twenty first century. To make the Catholic Faith relevant in this each we will need men and women that can lead us. Therefore, the first question to address is how can we increase the number of people ordained into the priesthood?

At this time God is asking of us to review the education of priests. Priests should be able to become the parishioners' leaders (shepherds) that look after the mental and spiritual welfare of the parishioners. Priests must have the ability to connect with the parishioners on a spiritual level and must be able to explain the gospel in a language that is understood by young and old. A priest

must be able to make the gospel relevant to today's parish communities; Catholicism has to be a dynamic living religion. At this time, God is asking of us to review the way parishes are run. To allow priests to be our spiritual leaders, their workload has to be freed from the day-to-day running of the parish. Like in business, neither the CEO nor the HR-manager gets involved with the maintenance of the assets.

At this time, God is asking of us to review the relationship between reconciliation and confession. Under current practice of the seal of confession, the priest is not allowed to reveal anything that is shared during confession even if it is a criminal act that a perpetrator confesses to. This puts an enormous weight on a priest's consciousness. If it involves the confession of a criminal act, the current practice makes a priest guilty of concealing a crime. As Catholics, we cannot ask this of our priests. I believe that this is an additional reason why there are only a few that are called to become a priest. If Catholicism is truly a dynamic living religion, then this practice has to be reviewed. Furthermore, the current practice does not help the perpetrator to get true forgiveness for his crimes. If a sinner truly wants to seek forgiveness from God, then they should also be willing to accept the worldly consequences of their actions.

The Church needs to recognise all its people and include them all, women and men, married, single, divorced, remarried, Gay or straight or trans, all abilities, young and old, All God's people need to be recognised. The Church needs to reach out to those who have been baptised / raised as Catholics but don't come to Church or join the Catholic community. The Catholic Church must own the years of cover ups and crimes against vulnerable children and people and offer a warm and open response to victims.

Group Response: We are being asked to pause, reflect and consider the burning issue of the place of Christ in the Australian Catholic Church. The ever-increasing pluralistic nature of society means that Australian Catholics need a deeper awareness of how their faith "fits" into such a society so that in 2020, we can make a genuine difference.

I believe that we as one country should be more prayerful and more accepting the differences and not to judge people by its race. That the word of God and Bible should be more promoted to the schools' community and stop hate and bullying togetherness and belongingness in the society.

Get off your butt, have a faith, believe in God, recognise there is a God, be upstanding and support God in any way you know, respond to his messages and give God your best. To love God.

1) God has been asking the laity to exercise their responsible authority as equals in the Church for centuries but the hierarchy won't allow it. The hierarchy keeps all the authority to themselves. This is unbalanced and unjust. Parish pastoral councils must have decision-making authority. The parish Pastoral Council includes the parish priest. It must become a shared and real responsibility. 2) Women and lay men must be given real authority—canonically equal with priests, especially in liturgical ministries. Stop creating advisory bodies. Create effective bodies with real authority to serve the Church and the wider Australian community. 3) Bishops/archbishops who see lay responses to the Plenary Council as "pet peeves" or who have closed minds by saying Church doctrine cannot be changed, are not open to the Holy Spirit. Church doctrine in many cases is man-made rules and regulations far removed from Jesus Christ and the Gospel teachings. Many

bishops and priests need a big change of attitude. 4) The primacy of conscience. When we die each one has to answer to God—we don't ask the parish priest or the bishop to do it on our behalf. 5) Reconciliation. Bring back the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. Do bishops/priests know what it is like to have been to a priest for confession and later found out he has gone to prison for paedophilia???

Humility, tender compassion and new cosmologies and theologies are prerequisites if the Church has any future. Return to the Gospel ... to the person of Jesus Christ. Create a more inclusive and synodal Church concerned for the reign of God. Create a Church that accompanies others amid the complexities and ambiguities of life. Create a Church that dares to imagine gender-blind leadership in the Body. Recognising the Spirit at work in all baptised members.

To continue to live our lives by the best version of ourselves that we can. To take time to reflect on our Catholic values and relevant traditions.

I believe that God is calling us to reconnect with the basics of our faith and to have a solid understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and an understanding that those teachings and beliefs are a direct result of what Jesus has taught us and asked of us as a family of God. So many people don't understand the beautiful history and love that is behind what the Church asks of us. Many people, including those of the Catholic Faith, think that the Church is outdated in its beliefs because it doesn't match what society now accepts, they just have no concept of the beauty of what is taught by the Church. Most people would know that the Church does not support same sex relationships or birth control but most would not be able to correctly articulate why the Church holds this view, many even who attend Mass regularly would struggle to explain the reasons. From the outside, and even to many within the Church, the practices and beliefs appear outdated and irrelevant to the modern world. Adult faith education needs to be a priority for the Australian Catholic Church of the future. We need to reconnect with our faith and the solid reasons that the Church teaches what it does. I see the future of Adult Faith Education as an abundance of opportunity, and in many different mediums, to learn about our beautiful faith. Face to face learning, online education, more book stores and also access to Catholic Library's where resources can be borrowed. Also, the beauty of the Mass needs to be understood far more deeply. People need to learn why the practices of the Church are the way they are, what is happening in the Mass and why we do what we do at Mass. If more people understood this they would appreciate Mass on a far deeper level. They would have a personal connect with the Mass and a deeper commitment to worship and that love will then filter to the next generation and the next and so on. In generations past, people were more willing to follow tradition without really questioning or understanding it but that is not the case in today's world.

God is asking us to make a faithful commitment to our sacramental life, community life and a commitment to the unchanging teachings of the Church. He is asking us to be prophetic to our society and not attempt to become more like it in order to be "relevant" or "attract members." This is counter-intuitive, and is not what Christ did in the Gospels.

To be guided by love and wisdom, with consideration of the greatest good for individuals, as well as society as a whole. I think more specific answers to this question might lead to many opposing, contradictory "messages from God" and might create more confusion than clarity, as some

respondents might claim they convey God's message while they might be just expressing their strong personal beliefs and biases.

God is asking as what we stand for as Catholics. It is a time when we are being asked if we stand for the Catholic faith or the corruption in the Catholic Church institution. The Catholic people are clear on this, the institution is not. And they are making the wrong declaration before the world and in front of God.

To be orthodox in our teaching and practices, and for the clergy to be aggressive in the condemnation of abortion, euthanasia, and homosexual practices. Homosexuals must not be recruited into the priesthood or religious life, and those already in the system must be removed from active ministry. The teaching of the faith in schools should revert to a similar system to that used in the 1950s and earlier using a catechism. I would suggest the Baltimore Catechism because it has scriptural references attached to each question and answer.

I feel God is asking all believers, yes, we Catholics, to do more praying to see what HE wants rather than doing what we think.

1) To show that the Church is still vital, relevant and loved, despite the scandals and appalling treatment of the Church by the media and public figures. Doubtless many are disappointed in the terrible behaviour of some religious, however this is always skewed and reported in sensationalist and unbalanced terms, largely overlooking abuse by other denominations. Christ did not shy away from hard times, He stayed true to His message and we need to follow that example. We should respond in a way that shows that we will not back down from our job of preaching the good news and making disciples. 2) Stop trying to change to try to fit in with what people think the modern world wants. Our Church is based on the basic truths given by Jesus—these basic truths do not change. Stop trying to be another 'try-hard' Hillsong (who are all about money)—this doesn't attract new people it just alienates existing members. We should not be trying to win a popularity contest—our basic traditions and truths are a treasure we greatly undervalue and take for granted. If we really believe that we are Christ's Church on earth why are we trying to change? Trying to please everybody means you please nobody. 3) Think hard about the Catholic school system. Unfortunately, many Catholic schools are not teaching our children the basics of our religion and traditions. They seem to be almost apologising for being Catholic and many teachers do not seem to be strong advocates for our faith, in fact just the opposite, teaching our children more about alternative lifestyles and picking and choosing from Catholic doctrine.

God is asking us to use our personal gifts and talents to spread his message of love within and beyond our Church. This will require honest dialogue and a sincere willingness to work together to build communities that are inclusive and focused on spiritual, pastoral and temporal growth for all. Transparency, accountability and responsibility should be the basis of planning our future together. At this stage in many Church communities, we are barely co-existing. To achieve true collaboration as the people of God, we need to develop better communication and cooperation.

Remain strong in our faith. ● Be more courageous in Our faith? ● Strengthen lay communities. ● Formation. ● Empowerment of young people. ● Ongoing formation past school age. ● Paid role for Catechists. ● Formation of those responsible for other souls. ● Being aware of God's presence

in daily life. ● Community in context. E.g. school, university. ● Building stronger Relationships, evangelisation.
<p>TO IMAGE JESUS IN OUR PERSON: To be like Jesus, the "Word of our loving and merciful Father made flesh", to be prayerful, joyful, humble, truthful, just, to heal, to be merciful and forgiving, to listen and reach out those lacking hope, to be respectful and encouraging to the "bent reed and the flickering flame": cultivating and bringing to maturity the voices that can vehicle the Gospel to be... TO IMAGE THE DISCIPLES AS COMMUNITY: To be all the above and more. TOGETHER: To be a community where the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is proclaimed. To be a community where God is worshipped with reverence and joy. To be a community where the Word of God is valued even more than bread. To be a community "precious to God", "in Christ" and vivified by the Holy Spirit. To be a community where every voice is respectfully listened to. To be a community where every gift is valued and nurtured. To be a community which is just. To be a community always acknowledging our human frailty and our need to be renewed. To be a community in which the poor and the vulnerable are accepted and encouraged to grow strong. To be a community where education is valued as a flowering of the mind and a pathway to truth. To be a community that appreciates beauty. To be a community in which "mutual love" is palpable ("see how thy love one another!" Tertullian). To be a community that's primary "work" is to "love the world" (Jn 3, 16). To be for our brothers and sisters an oasis of unity and love where they can come and be welcomed, fed and refreshed. To be the "inn" where poor "half dead" humanity can be respectfully received and cared for. To be ...</p>
Reconciliation needs to come into the 21st century. There are those who feel they cannot receive communion if they have not properly confessed and so very rarely receive communion. People such as divorcees, those who've had an abortion. The group reflected on the last supper which was the first celebration of the Eucharist and how the apostles received the body and blood of Christ. There were no conditions placed on them to receive communion.
God is asking us to grow and change. The old ways of the Catholic Church are not working and Catholic people in Australia are turning away from their faith in droves. Given the recent events regarding Cardinal Pell and other convicted priests, there is no wonder. There needs to be a huge effort made to re-establish this trust and this starts by allowing married men and women to be priests. I would also like to see a greater acceptance and understanding of homosexuality and gay marriage. There also needs to be a greater emphasis on providing support and guidance to our Catholic youth. We need to bring the Church into the 21st century and make Masses more relevant. The homilies should be related to what is happening in today's world. The impacts of social media, changing family dynamics and current issues. I think God is asking us to keep in mind that we are all sinners and yet he loves us all unconditionally. To stay true to the basic fundamentals of our faith such as the ten commandments.
I think that God is asking Australians to be welcoming to all who want to be part of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Faith including Gay (including LGBTIQA+) Catholics. We are all made in God's image including those of us that are same sex attracted. We deserve the same love and respect that everyone deserves and Jesus preached. In the years since my coming out as a gay man I have been welcomed by my children, my friends, my work mates, my community including

various organisations that I volunteer for and those of my local Catholic parish who know that I am gay.
Reclaim, Explain and Maintain our Traditions. We have a crisis in belief in the Real Presence and reverence in Church. Excel in the use of our beautiful uplifting sacred music. Deep education—adult and young adult. —Teach the beauty of our Faith. Teach the Faith! Do not mess with our traditional prayers. MARRIAGE—teach them what authentic marriage and LOVE is and looks like. We do not need married priests, women priests, etc. We have a crisis of fatherhood and masculinity. There seems to be a lack of respect for the ‘offices’ of our clergy and the teachings of the Magisterium. PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT FOR THESE POINTS.
We need to get back to being the ‘people of God’: ‘What does it mean to be the People of God?’ Pope Francis asked at his weekly audience on June 12, 2013. As he neared the end of his midday address, the Pontiff offered an answer to his own question: ‘Being the Church, being the People of God, means being God’s leaven in this our humanity.’ By referring to the Church as the ‘People of God,’ he remarked, the Council fathers emphasized the reality that ‘God doesn’t belong to any particular people because He is the one who calls us.’ Francis’ three Apostolic Exhortations are as good a guide of any to recovering how to be ‘the leaven in the lump’ that is this world of ours... Maybe She is asking us to remember the words of the Chilean people in the 1970s: “The people united will never be defeated”. For me, to become tied up with the question of governance is a futile exercise if the Church insists on describing itself as an institution. Jesus did not set up an institution.
We should be bold in our faith, be an instrument of peace, love and mercy to others especially to the lost, the least and the last. Be vigilant of our faith especially to guide the young in the modern culture of death society, the ephemeral culture of our new generations of believers. We should also learn to embrace the change of our modern society but not losing our faith and Christian values. As a Catholic, it’s our duty to get out of our comfort zone to evangelize others and bring back to the faith for those lost brethren.
To listen to his Spirit, to be led by the Spirit and his protective word. Embrace the body of Christ. To encourage people. To use their spiritual gift to enhance the Body of Christ.
To be more community focused. To acknowledge the crimes that have been done and to be more open about them. To be more prayerful in our daily lives. To address them promptly when they are brought to the Church’s attention. That the Church ...
God would be asking us to look at our faith and the way we live our lives within our faith, and to try to be truly at one with him.
Go back to the basic teaching instead of getting logged down with over ruling.
Honesty, Courage and ability to look forward.
The role of the laity needs to be expanded. At the moment all decisions are made by clergy and the laity have no real role in making or influencing these decisions. Parish priests can run their parish as a dictatorship and the parish community will have no real say or ability to change this situation. This process is then repeated at all higher levels of the Church. The results are clearly

seen in the outcomes of the Royal Commission. Women in particular make up the majority of the parish community yet can have no role in Church directions or sacramental life.
I believe that God is asking his people to fall more deeply into his embrace. This involved many varied approaches. Some examples: —Deep and full catechises of ALL the Church. —Enriching of our embrace of Church tradition in all aspects e.g. liturgy, sacramentalism and pageantry. —Affirmation and promotion of personal prayer beyond Sunday Mass.
God is asking that we, the Catholic Church, eradicate the ungodliness in all that we say and do and stand for so that the kingdom of God is more truly represented on earth.
To return to the practice of the Faith. To care for those in our community who are less well off. To make just laws faithful to the law of God.
I don't feel that God is asking Australia anything that is particular only to the Nation. I believe that God is always and forever asking his people to have faith and trust in him, to love others and to live this love in our daily lives, to forgive, to be courageous, to be followers of Christ and to spread the word of God with the help of the Holy Spirit. I believe God is asking us to pray and to abide in Him. He is asking people of our time rather than our place to be strong in their conviction and not give in to the pressure of the world to conform to their ways. God is asking us to support and stand by our Church, its traditions, its clergy and its teachings in the face of those who seek to change it and/or destroy it.
1) Evangelisation of the good news of Jesus Christ. I wish in this sense to have an Australian Catholic radio station broadcasting Christian programs every day. It is a high priority for me! 2) As a Catholic human being it is essential to have compassion for the poor people in our society and struggle for their human rights. 3) To explain and announce the moral Catholic values gives a stability to live and change in an uncertain and turbulent society.
Pope Francis in his recent letter spoke about Clericalism, whether fostered by priests themselves or by the lay persons, leads to the ecclesial body that helps supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say "no " to abuse is to say an emphatic "no" to all forms of clericalism. Whether it is the sexual abuse of children by clergy or the sexual abuse of vulnerable women which has been reported as being so prevalent in the Church throughout the entire world the root cause of all this is the abuse of the clergy's trusted position within the Church. I believe that we have to listed and act on this abuse as a first part of addressing the situation we have presently in the global Church. Pope Francis who has been elected by the Church under the influence of the Holy Spirit has to be listened to in this his statement on the situation within the Church. The training of priests has to change. The inclusion of women in the governance of the Church has to change so as to prevent the same situation which is presently in repeating itself.
God is asking for us to be Saints. What does this mean? Being holy or 'whole', and loving Him who is Love itself, with all our minds, hearts, and bodies. But "if you love me you will keep my word". What is His word? We need to know Him better through His Word and Tradition, as given to us through the interpretation and authority of the Catholic Church, given succinctly in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. I reiterate the importance that must be placed on this 'catechism', which,

if unpacked well, will cover most of the questions we seek as Catholics. We need good priests, religious and theologians who understand this teaching to come forward and speak or write about the truths of life (our Faith) in their respective capacities. Education or re-education of the faithful about truths of our Faith is vital for us to move closer to the Truth Himself—God, which should be the goal of our lives. The truth will set us free, in a world (and Church) suffocating in deceit, confusion, and blindness. Truths such as the Four Last Things, the importance of the sacraments and prayer, and particularly the Mass and what it is. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful are what God is. The Sacred Liturgy (particularly the Mass) is where we encounter God in a direct way (especially in His physical Presence). The liturgical traditions of our Church (particularly her music, but also her art, architecture, sacramentals, etc.) are there to point us closer to the truth. These traditions (e.g. Gregorian Chant) have been used by saints and the Church for centuries, because it ‘works’. It’s there to be used for our benefit but also to give greater glory to God. Unfortunately, the knowledge and use of these traditions has waned over more recent times, to our loss. When we do away with beautiful traditions (particularly regarding the worship of God), we start to lose sight of the beauty, truth, and goodness of God. Sacred Music is a particularly important and powerful way of worshipping God in the liturgy, but especially if it’s done right and well (in accordance with the Church’s tradition and guidance on the instruments, music and its texts). Archbishop Sample of the US recently wrote a great letter about this topic, called “Love God? Let your music aim high”. Cardinal Sarah also writes well and specifically on this (and the Liturgy in general). It’s not ‘tradition’ for no reason, and some music and instruments are more beautiful and suitable than others for certain occasions, particularly the Liturgy. Objective beauty is a thing. Of course, it won’t be possible for every Church to have the resources available for a full Gregorian choir and pipe organ straight away, but education of this is still important, and got to start somewhere. A reconnection of our Church with its ‘Beauty’ will help us in an irreplaceable way to awaken or reawaken a sense of ‘wonder and awe’, and bring our hearts, minds and bodies closer to the One who created them.

Please refer to attachment. I have typed up my thoughts there on a direction for resolving the fragmentation in our local Australian Church Community and the pastoral consequences of that fragmentation. I propose the consideration of a whole-of-community approach, rather than the reductionist slicing and dicing into demographic segments (youth groups, etc.).

For the renewal of academic education in theology, particularly sacramental theology, bioethics and moral theology, in MIDDLE-AGED PRIESTS AND PRIESTS WITH MORE THAN 5 YEARS UNTIL RETIREMENT. We need our priests to be a step ahead of us so they can guide us. More and more people are getting Masters degrees in theology and philosophy now. And the problems of today's world are more and more complex!

Better HUMAN FORMATION (appropriate behaviour and interaction with different demographics, emotional intelligence, etc.)—there are some young priests emerging that are spectacularly well formed from a doctrinal perspective but they lack prudence and I've seen much damage in university communities in particular as a result.

Please consider ways of providing better access to last rights for the dying, and better access to Confession for the rest of the Faithful. These two needs are WOEFULLY under serviced.

Dear Australian bishops and Dear Papa Francesco, The Loving God of Jesus Christ of Nazareth always asks Nations to live by the 10 Commandments fashioned to reform Moses' people and to embrace the Beatitudes, live Virtuously as Jesus taught. We are empowered by The Holy Spirit to teach all Nations. The Mystery of Theological Life! The sinfulness that plagued our Church from the beginning, breaks my Motherly heart ... but not my Spirit ... so long as I keep on inviting our Teacher and Saviour in this my earthly life ... day by day. We must stay together praying and finding solutions to our problems. The 'fashions' of Roman Imperialism are irrelevant to our Christian Church life, with dignity, let us embrace virtuous simplicity in theology and kerygmatic spirituality. Clericalism has served us badly to achieve the end for which we were created. The Family needs to know how to exercise our priestly power by virtue of our baptism from early childhood. Since Grace builds on Nature, our Church Institutions should come together to 'nudge' State Governments to promote THE much-needed TRAINING that all boys and girls urgently need from early childhood to tertiary education and beyond. • All children should learn by doing—be trained: to respect themselves and each other, to know the power of sex and to receive all the TRAINING NECESSARY TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE PARENTS—biological parents or otherwise. This totally lacking and necessary TRAINING must involve all biological parents and carers to be effective. Who other than our schools can TRAIN properly all our children and their parents if not the schools? Our schools which hold our children most days of the week and count on our financial resources: TAX et cetera. To nurture the next generation in the truly Christian Way is the most important and the most difficult VOCATION on this planet. Jesus' mission was precisely concerned with nurturing the Family to transform a brutish-barbaric society into one able to call God: Our Father! The Gospel reveals Jesus as our Brother and our Saviour. The titles given Him by humans, are from the minds of the now defunct empires who 'owned' their subjects' body and soul. These outlandish titles are an insult to Jesus our Saviour and Brother, who taught us to call God, Our Father. Jesus, the Son of God our Spiritual Father, who followed the trade of his human father Joseph working as a carpenter. The liturgy's language is sometimes misleading, needs reviewing.

• For our leaders ... both laity and clergy ... to serve one another as Jesus taught us ... not succumbing to clericalism, control, power, narcissism and materialism. If a leader displays this kind of behaviour in their treatment of others then the person who has been harmed needs to know where to go and how to deal with these problems which is in a non-threatening and safe environment and people have to have the guts to speak up where injustice, power and clericalism is witnessed and know they will be heard. • To ensure that there is faith in the bishops and priests and paid staff members, there should be a publicly known and an easily obtained transparent Policy and Procedure document for any complaint or grievance between the clergy, paid Church employees and specific pastoral care and follow up to support anyone who has been treated badly (no matter what age ... but especially women and the elderly). Every report needs to be listened to and dealt with immediately and strongly ... All grievances to follow the Gospel message in Mt. 18:15-20. Sadly, many still put our leaders on a pedestal and other clergy and laity don't have the will or the courage to challenge unacceptable behaviour. "It's none of my

business” ... “they are big boys let them sort out their own problems” ... “if I rock the boat my position in the parish will be endangered” (whether it be a Church employee, a teacher or a president or a leader in a parish group) ... or “I am scared of being verbally abused, publicly denounced and do not feel safe” I believe that God is asking us to wake up and to listen. • For all Catholics to look at ourselves in the mirror and ask ... where have I tried to be like Christ today and where have I failed to be like Christ today. An Australia wide retreat with the same guidelines and catechesis for every single Catholic ... even if done online and sections need to be completed before the next section commences. • To have leaders with a moral conscience and have a community who love us enough to tell us when we have failed. Although man frequently compares authority with control, dominion, success ... for God, authority is always synonymous with service, humility and love ... “but who would be great among you must be your servant, who would be first among you must be your slave.”(Mt. 20:25-27) • To humbly and actively serve and care for the all members of our community ... the elderly, the frail, the vulnerable, the families, the lapsed Catholic, the unchurched, with intolerance, favour and preferences given to all as equals in that service. To respect the women who work as volunteers in parishes, get paid nothing, give all their time, money and talents. People are walking with their feet and finance right now ... and the majority of the work performed in a parish is done by women.

EVANGELIZATION WITHIN THE FAMILY God is asking us to be bold and brave like the Apostles after the first Pentecost and speak up through our words and actions that we are followers of Christ. But this is not easy, especially in this climate of a non-Christian culture which is why we need to be encouraged and supported by those who are like minded. When I go to Mass, or involved with others in the Christian community ... the majority is mostly 55 and over ... and more often ... much older than 55 (like me). I need my Christian community who are Christ-centred, who are fair dinkum, who thirst for ongoing formation, who I trust to share my story, in order to continue to be challenged in my own formation so that I can find the words to pass on my faith to my grandchildren, like those early Apostles. I yearn to have these same connections with younger parents of faith ... but only a few are to be seen in the Church ... or at any Catholic activity ... for they have walked away. My own 2 sons are included ... I have no problem in being brave and bold with my 5 grandchildren, who go to a Catholic school, but I feel like a voice in the wilderness in sharing our Catholic faith as they have not formed a deep love of and don't know about God's love for them so they can form a personal relationship with him. If it takes a village to raise children, it takes more lovers of Christ to inspire children to desire to know him too. Somewhere we have missed a generation or 2 in sharing our faith ... and unless we change our way to reach the unchurched of today through family ministries, and the strength of our Catholic Education, valuing the faith passed down from their ancestors and their grandparents... there will be no light for our future generations. It's a beautiful privilege to talk about Jesus who walked on the earth, His father, God our Creator and the Holy Spirit who pours out that love of the Father and the Son so we can follow. Catholic teachers are nice people who love to teach ... as that is their profession. I don't encounter many lovers of Jesus, who share why they love him, how it makes them happy and joyful, confident that God loves them, why they pray and follow him, as they don't know how to share deeply their own faith with the children ... nor do they grasp that love can't be shared until you give it away.

To be more open, sensitive, brave and generous with caring to speak to all people ... for giving of ourselves.
I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time to be good people and show love and compassion to everyone. I believe that we should show acceptance and inclusion in society.
To respond to the needs of a rapidly changing society, and to spread the joy of Catholic life in Australia.
God is looking for honesty. As individuals, as a collective and as a Church. We need to look at ourselves and strip everything back to zero. We live in a broken world—the Catholic Church has an opportunity to be a beacon of safety, hope and love. In the light of recent events, we can genuinely say that this trust between society and the Church has been broken. To regain this trust, we must be open to change.
To be defended of life.
Who we are as a Church? How effective we are as a Church for those who make up the Church? Do we as a Church live our lives in allegiance to Jesus Christ? Are we seen as a positive light in the world? If not, why not? Would Christ become a member of our Church if he were here today? Why or Why Not?
That the Church ceases to deny marriage for priests, ceases to deny an equal role for women including priesthood. That the Church understands it is not possible to keep importing priests as one would import qualified labour for the industry because of shortage of qualified personnel. Whilst one is grateful that priests have come here from overseas at great personal costs, one cannot deny the language issue and the cultural issue. A parish is a local community administered by Australians for Australians. This assertion in no way diminishes the immense contribution made by priests who have come here to fill the gap caused by the lack of vocation the Church has brought upon itself.
To return to Apostolic teachings of Jesus Christ and stop trying to be everything to everyone. Jesus gave the text book but it is unrecognisable today as taught by Catholics. The move to One World Religion must stop. Listen to his mother and pray the Rosary and recognise the rich and rewarding guide book of thousands of years that developed Western Civilisation. Protect the Faith before it is too late and stop the Marxist clap trap that is everywhere parading as Faith. Moral and Cultural relativity does away with Christ and this must stop.
** Use the great gifts women and lay men have to bring to Church leadership and governance. Women should be represented in all areas of Church life. To respect women also necessitates use of inclusive language in liturgy. ** To form clergy out of the prevailing culture of clericalism which sets them apart from other faithful and gives them exclusive power and authority in Church governance. ** Review pastoral practice around exclusion of divorced and re-married Catholics from full participation in the Eucharist. ** Provide more resources to adult faith formation rather than trying to evangelise children in school apart from their families. ** Hear the call for some married men, including some already formed for priesthood, to minister in parishes. While celibacy might still be the norm, the fact that there are already some married priests in our

Australian Church proves the point that this is a man-made rule which can be changed, so that the many people deprived of Eucharist and sacraments can be nourished.

I think God is asking us to listen to our youth, especially our committed Catholic young people. This is not just because they are young, but because, from what I am hearing and reading and seeing, their sights are on the Truth, on Jesus and on the fullness of truth in doctrine and dogma and guidelines for Christian living. This I note while at the same time grieving that our own children, now in their thirties and forties, seem to have lost connection with the Catholic Church, even though some grandchildren still attend Catholic schools. They appear to have become one with a large group of their generation and ours who seem to find no relevance in the faith of their childhood. Having done some study of faith development and been an RE teacher myself, I understand that each person has to find their own "owned" faith through life's pathways. It is to be hoped that events and reflection, perhaps even crises may be the turning point, as it often comes in later life. We feel the gulf between our faith and practice and the seemingly endless busyness of our children's lives. For all these reasons, I am filled with hope and joy and excitement when I see and read about the depth and level of commitment among those young people who are attending Mass and eager to share their faith. This is a situation which warrants more attention in our pastoral context, so that older Catholics may realize that God is at work among our youth and among the committed priests, bishops and lay leaders who are nourishing them and us. Sadly, the harm done within the Church and the extreme forces of secular society, have done much to try to drain us of hope and trust. This must not blind us, deafen us to what the Spirit is doing—a new thing, a refreshing vital infusion through the open hearts of young people encouraged and guided by our Holy Father, our bishops, priests, and laypeople.

I don't know that's the issue as I see with other faiths it may be to bring the good Catholic values to life in a new way of the 20th century that people want to be part of it again.

We need to get to know people we share our Church with (not just a 'peace be with you' handshake). Have Church events where locals can meet and chat. Not just for youths. Make it more of a community where we can help each other feel welcome. If people feel welcome, then I think they will return. Have a jumping castle for kids after Mass and parents can have tea or coffee. This would help people connect. So many people longing to connect with others and searching for groups to join. We need young priests. So many old priests who can't connect or are too tired? Sometimes, Mass can seem too hard for them and they sound like they're going to put themselves to bed unfortunately. Maybe the future needs priests who can marry? Or female priests? We are running out of priests though and it's a worry. Priests should have more time to mingle with Church-goers instead of all the paperwork they have to do. Let them have a secretary to do the paperwork.

God is asking us to renew the Church, to change direction, to change the structures to be an inclusive Church which takes on the responsibility of ALL people in the world, the poor, the downtrodden, the outcast, those of many different cultures and traditions. In particular, to implement the many Church documents pointing to justice and equity for all; to proclaim the hidden Catholic Social Justice Principles, too long buried by the clerical establishment. The importance of justice for all, is the basis of all that is missing from Church practice and for too long, the Church has taught that one's personal love and friendship with God is the goal of each

Catholic's personal journey without taking into consideration the rest of the world and people of other religions.
I believe that God is asking the Church in Australia at the moment to lose the hypocrisy and pomposity that has reigned supreme in the Church's recent history. I believe this means that the Church must reconsider their current role in society, and radically change their practices and attitudes towards the world if they wish to be a force for God in the years to come. I believe God is asking us to be an instrument of love and hope in a world filled with darkness, hatred, and despair. Currently, the Church has become a source of great unhappiness, in which many Catholics feel as though they have been betrayed by the people who seek to represent them. I believe God is calling for us to loudly and publicly acknowledge past wrong, and make radical changes to their structure and mode of delivery in order to be a positive presence for the Kingdom of God that is on earth. The Church is made up of temporary human beings, and its focus should be on the Kingdom of Heaven that is present in earth. As Jesus replied to the Pharisees in Luke 17:20-21: "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."
God is asking us to find ways to make the Catholic Church relevant and more appealing to people especially young people. For the Church to survive and thrive, we need to be open minded about the possibility of married priests, and female priests. The Catholic Church also needs to include the rights of gay people to be married in the Church. More needs to be done to recognise and have better safeguards against the sexual abuse of the young and vulnerable. A fresh approach needs to be taken towards all of the many and varied rules and regulations that the Church has, as this discourages many people from either continuing as an active faith member or joining the Church at all.
I think that God is asking us to grow in a contemplative mind. A mind that bares all and excludes none. But this is a way of knowing that needs to be taught. Taught to the faithful and children, it is a different mind, not black and white but able to absorb paradox and contradiction so that love can be expanded. We have tended to hide behind institutions and rules and it is so much easier to follow rules and say we believe in creeds than to love a person. To enter into a personal relationship with God and our communities. I don't believe that tearing down all super structures is the route, however rebuilding the interior of the structure which is the Church is critical at this time. The faithful need healing at this time, the Church's mistakes and humiliations are not only being carried by the Church but by all of God's people Catholic or not. We are all connected, quantum theory has proved this as one is only a part of one in the whole. The invisible world exists and needs to be included in the decisions of the Church moving forward. Darkness is a better teacher than light at certain times. If the Church is to grow in Australia then people need to be able to really see the world and absorb its contradictions not just negate them. There is a pattern of birth, death and resurrection in all things and this pattern needs to be acknowledged in communities, institutional religion and parishes. Women deacons should not just be a thought but an implementation to bring local healing to parishes.
Authenticity, Transformation, Openness, Getting back to the basics—Foundations, Encounter with God, Community building, Formation, Trust, Truthfulness, Prayer, Participation of women,

Increased role of the laity, Broader understanding of vocation, Recognition of singleness as a large part of people's lives and not just a step to consecrated life, priesthood, or marriage.

I think God is asking the Australian Catholic Church to really consider the long-term future of the Church and discern all decisions WITH LOVE and with the final aim of increasing LOVE in our communities (Love of God, love for each other and love for our personal relationship with God/ourselves as one in whom God dwells). That all the decisions resulting from this Plenary Council are made with the young people and who will be living in the next 80 years or so at the forefront of the mind and heart. That we live lives of true faith, fully trusting in God, not afraid to love others and God in the world around us. To be BOLD in living out our faith—don't you agree that the issue about people leaving/not joining the Catholic faith is because people don't SEE it in action?

I think we need to take a serious look at why young people are disengaged with the Church. With three young adults in my home, each of whom have been very churched, they are all disinterested in worship at Sunday Mass. Each of them has a belief in God and will proudly say that they are Catholic, but they will not participate actively in the life of the Church. They will cite that the Mass generally is quite boring (but do not like the idea of Hillsong) and irrelevant to their lifestyle. As a high school teacher, this is also very evident in my school. My students are always wanting to know more about religion and are genuinely interested, but are lacking in opportunities to fully engage in the life of the Church. We must find ways to engage our youth.

Participation and Equity Issues • Place the Laity including women, in real positions across all organs of the Church. We, the Laity, need to be included at every level of Church management and policy making, at parish and Diocesan level through to being members of the Australian Catholic bishops' Conference, with equal speaking and voting rights. We ask that a plan be established to reflect real movement in this area. • Hierarchy cannot explain or justify the exclusion of women from participation across all organs of the Church including that of the Lector, Acolyte, Deacon and priest. There is no real explanation much less justification for this not being the case. To quote Mary McAleese from her well-publicised speech at the Voices of Faith International Women's Day Conference in March 2018 at the Jesuit Curia Rome, our Church is limping on one wing without full and equal participation of women. Right now, it is worse than limping, it is mortally undermined. A quote from the Outcome Document from the Synod of bishops meeting in Rome in October 2018 states: "... The absence of women's voices and points of view impoverishes discussion and the path of the Church, subtracting a precious contribution from discernment" • Our Community is asking for signs and experience of joy. Until our Church is radically renewed this is not possible. • Liturgy—Our Community asks for gender-neutral language which reflects meaningful, contemporary theology and does not trivialise the Mystery of God by referring to God as if a male person. • Our people are expressing serious concern at the lack of opportunities available for the (remaining) young people in our community to be more engaged in meaningful Church life. We know this cannot happen within the existing Church structure. We need leadership, radical flexibility and charismatic young people to do this, in order to find ways of meeting God in their lives, outside the Church walls. • Our parish works with all other Christian Churches in the district. Our priest celebrates the Eucharist with us in our homes and these celebrations are ecumenical. Our Christian brothers and sisters MUST be free to receive the

Eucharist without the barriers that the Catholic Church currently has in place. For Lay people and the Penitent Liturgy, i) We urge you to promote Communion as the food of mercy. Please schedule liturgies of mercy and welcome to celebrate the return of separated Christians to the Eucharist and to the parish community. The Pope recently said that, "without the Eucharist, what the Church does is in vain." ii) To reinforce the message of welcome, we must offer to long-separated souls, as detailed in our summary report, a schedule of liturgies including the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation as part of Masses of welcome return. These separated Christians risk leaving this life without reconciliation.

I believe God is asking us to live as an authentic community of people who love God. So authentic and so real that we reach and attract our disconnected brothers and sisters. That being true witnesses of God's love, we give those who are lost a compelling reason to believe that God loves them and He is seeking to have a personal encounter with them.

God is asking us "Where did you get it so wrong? How have you let the hierarchy of His Church become so rich, powerful and privileged, so deceptive and manipulative, so removed from His people, and who have ruled with fear, instead of with acceptance and love, stifling spiritual, intellectual, psychological and social development and a life of fulfilment? God is asking us to keep his commandments: to love Him and to love one another as He loves us. He is asking us if we've helped the poor; fed the hungry; given drink to those who are thirsty; clothed the naked; housed the homeless; visited those in prison; comforted those sick and grieving; ensured people are properly educated; treated the sick; support and advocated for the lonely, the disenfranchised, the marginalised; reconciled with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; distributed and fairly shared the wealth of the country; stood by Refugees and people seeking asylum; and lived and preached His Gospel. Why have you exploited the natural resources of the land, rivers and sea and what are you doing about recovering and rectifying that? Would Australia, which has been blessed as a wealthy country whose population enjoys a standard of living (until now) which has improved with each generation, better respond to the needs of the millions of refugees (including climate refugees), displaced persons (as a result of war, famine, drought etc.) and people seeking asylum from persecution throughout the world? And demonstrate to the rest of the world what can be done, instead of poor souls languishing in refugee and concentration camps?

God is asking us to get back to basics and to reconnect with the Holy Spirit. We have become so disconnected, self-centred and self-focused and Australians are suffering with depression, loneliness, anxiety and suicide.

To love one another as I have loved you

I think God is asking us to take our children to church and to teach them to pray together as a family, so they will then carry on this tradition when they have their own family. To help keep our churches our sacred homes, for the future.

Be strong in our faith in this time of great diversity and change. Be strong in our gifts of faith, hope and charity. Be vigilant and compassionate to those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

I think priests should be allowed to marry.

Baptisms should be carried out during the Mass and the baby and parents introduced to the parish.

Make people proud to say they are a Catholic Christian. Raise awareness of the good the Church does e.g. pastoral care, St Vinnies, Aged care, counselling, Project Compassion, etc. Try and promote young people's church attendance. Use overheads, etc. during Mass. Clarify historical content in sermons. It promotes understanding.

To keep beliefs and stand firm for all opposed.

Priesthood—seminary training needs to be looked at in public relations, administration as this is the reality of a parish priest's role. There also needs to be ongoing support for priests and acceptance of priests' humanity. The role of laity in the Church needs to be looked at—Pastoral associates or Deacons could do more to support priests if trained properly and accepted as valuable. Then priests focus could be on the spiritual development of people. Women priests and Married priests—we need ongoing discussions as to the positives and negatives and some churches already have both. Transparency from top down in relation to professional conduct of priests—how it is handled, wording and timing can help prevent and stop gossip and help community understanding and acceptance of situations. A more inclusive Church for women, divorcees, couples who need to access IVF and infertility, youth in Mass, elderly in schools, abuse victims and their families and refugees. More emphasis is needed on knowing God and learning, as contemporary society is different, catechesis is different since Vatican II and education is different. There is less understanding and respect about Church and religion/God.

I think God is asking us to be a welcoming people, to be approachable, to be inclusive to everyone, especially at Church.

Celibacy is away from the Apostles' thinking. Under compulsory celibacy, people are less likely to maintain celibacy. Priests may maintain celibacy if not forced to. Everyone has growth through life experiences. At 20 years old, you are different to a person at 40 years old and people get strength out of Love. God gives us free will do celibacy out of free will and out of love not compulsion, then you may have more priests. Women as priest is not what Jesus wanted otherwise Jesus would have had his mother as a priest. However that was in a male dominated society. Women priests could choose celibacy too and therefore we would benefit from more dialogue and discussion on women priests. In the past, people used to trust in God's provision even if things were tough and hard. Youths—How do we reconnect with youths? Youths are not going to Church. We need to reconnect with families who have kids. During the sacramental program, kids have been intimidated and yelled at. We need to role model what it is to be Catholic to our children. The yelling at our children is horrific. Too strict and Stern. The sacramental program is an important stage for children and parents. Not just the Day of the sacrament but the process, the learning. *Laudato Si'*—we need to take action within our Diocese and churches and Catholic Organisations, we need to invest in solar panels in our schools, parishes, offices. We pretend that we are teaching our kids but we are not acting, not doing, not living. The Church could save money after the initial investment too which could go towards other ministries. We need open communication

a priority. Statements on professional misconduct have left people thinking everything is a cover up. These need to be made clearer. The Church has failed so many people and parishes in what they have said and how it has been said. The Church has got it wrong in many ways so people have used their imaginations if there haven't been facts stated. The Church has been unfair to those who have been loyal to the Church. The Church owes it to the people who have worked and struggled to build Parishes. Bishops need to stand up and tell the Truth. If other professions such as teacher did some of the things that priests have been found to have done, they would be sacked. If things are not illegal, tell us what they are and forgive. It may be embarrassing but covering up is worse. The truth would stop rumours. Issues are not resolved, it impacts on all priests. We all have moments of bad judgement, hurt but not illegal actions. For children and parents, these illegal acts are unforgivable and there needs to be justice. Although God will be the ultimate judge.

To be patient, wait and watch—and pray that the Church officials will see all people and in the Church pews and give them the respect they deserve.

To build caring, joy-filled Christian Communities capable of spreading the good news, and not dominated by men in black who only know Canon law, and want to dominate non-ordained Catholics through a regimen of guilt, and insisting that they know more about running the secular/community/business side of a parish than loyal parishioners who have lived there for several decades and have the secular skills to do the job better.

There is a disconnect between youth and our faith. Youth need to "own" their faith even though it is handed down to them. The group believed that youth are disconnected because their parents are disconnected. Youth are more questioning now than they were 50 years ago. As a group we felt that youth are lacking a personal relationship with Jesus as they no longer "just do as their parents tell them" and usually their parents are not regular church-goers either. The Church exists to evangelize or to give "Jesus" to the people; to tell them show them, celebrate, live that Jesus is OUR/THE treasure. Youth need to find purpose, focus in the Eucharist and in the sacraments. The world also has so many distractions to deal with. Christian Catholics need to embrace the joy that their faith brings.

To reinvigorate the real presence of Jesus in the Church and for Catholics to deepen their faith and acknowledge Him as their Lord and God. The group believes that Catholics have lost the knowledge that God is Present in them and in the Church and that we need to become more Christ-centred. To pray, praise and celebrate God's presence.

The group felt that fathers need to be more present in the church/Mass/church activities. In this way children would be more inclined to be at Mass and be part of the Church community

The role of women, especially nuns, needs to be expanded. A decrease in priests means lay people need to have more roles in the Church. People are being deprived of the sacraments because of the shortage of priests. Lay need to find their strengths to be participants in the Church and its responsibilities. Each parish should have a council where the parish priest does not need to make major decisions

God is asking us to come up with a workable set of expectations that are reasonable and achievable for Catholics!! God is asking us to discover WHY people are leaving the Church in droves?!! Why churches are full at Xmas and Easter, with low attendance at other times!! Make the Mass the focus and include hymns of the modern generation!! Lead by example and a willingness to include youth!! Have a Sunday school Session that is more interactive! For people to come back to the Church! Reassess the Church format! To make the latest theological thinking part of the Church's preaching! Love God and Love others! Admit mistakes and work towards the future!! Reconnect the parish and the Church! Remain prayerful! Include divorcees in all the Church has to offer! Be Missionary in your approach! Don't succumb to Peer Pressure! Stand up for yourself and the Catholic Faith! To pray for the success of the Plenary Council! To be more respectful and inclusive of women! To be active!!

I believe the Catholic Church in Australia—i.e. the people—needs to rise above what has happened in the past, re: paedophilia, and continue to do what Catholics do best: practise their Faith, love each other, and help those less fortunate. We do it so well!

Better training and support of priests.

For the Church to be more inclusive.

Value the truth.

Seeing the sacrament of the Eucharist as one of reconciliation.

Consecrate Russia to the heart of our Immaculate Mary.

To focus on and hold dear all teachings of Catholic Orthodoxy. Modernism has sadly entered into the Church. Many people of the world are yearning for orthodoxy and need to be able to find it in the Catholic Church. Naturally this must always be done in love with full charity. This is important has many adherents to orthodoxy can be perceived as uncharitable at times.

I think God is asking us in Australia at this time and at all times that we radically follow Him, by lives of service within the Church and to those not yet a part of it. I think He is asking us to be a Church that follows His unchanging truth without compromise. I believe He is asking us to be evangelistic without trying to change Catholicism to be more 'relevant' or 'accommodating' to the culture. As a Church, we should be showing people the beauty of dying to self and living lives solely in pursuit of Christ. We should have better and more orthodox religious instruction in schools. We should have silent Ignatian retreats compulsory every year in high schools. We should have a greater emphasis on forming priests. We should make an effort to have liturgies be truly transcendent, a glimpse of the Heavenly liturgy, with no trashy songs, plenty of incense, and we should inculcate a renewed sense of the sacred. School Masses should not be run by the school, but children should attend the normal parish Mass so they are more integrated into parish life. Times for Confession should be made more regular in parishes. Priests should still celebrate Mass on Mondays.

To create loving Christian Communities where we are able to love each other, ourselves and God in equal measures as God is in all of us. These communities cannot be hierarchical or exclusive. No

one has the right to deny anyone else full access to God and the sacraments. The Mass is for our nourishment by coming all together with God to be able to do the real work of God of spreading the Good News of how boundlessly loved we all are.

To make essential changes so that Christian communities can become united, loving, caring communities able to spread the good news that we are all loved.

With respect to the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse, God is requiring those who had control over the situation, which in most instances means the bishops, senior clerics and head of religious orders to demonstrate true penance, to develop policies and procedures for the care of victims and their families, to generously recompense the victims for the costs they have already incurred and ensure, to respond rapidly to the findings and not leave victims in limbo and to approach the training and selection of priests and religious with an open mind, not restricted by past tradition. All remedies must be on the table including celibacy, the seal of the confessional, the involvement of professional laity, regardless of faith or gender in the selection of priests and religious and in the tribunals that may be required to examine behaviour. Persons should not be permitted to commence any training for religious or clerical life until they have demonstrated adult maturity and are at least 25 years old. I feel that the findings of the commission have demonstrated that the Church has failed in all these areas and, I regret to say, I do not believe that the Church has shown real contrition and little by way of Pastoral care.

God is telling the Church to listen to the people at grass roots level and wake up to the fact that it needs to change with the times. Our Church is getting smaller and other new so-called churches are popping up everywhere. Our numbers are dwindling and theirs are increasing. We need to look what they are doing and change with the time. We keep the young ones and their families until they have finished their sacraments and then we don't see them again unless it's Christmas or Easter. We need to find a way to keep the young ones and their families.

Answer: I am answering all three questions together. Australia (and the whole world) is steeped in the Occult. The Church in Australia needs to come up with a Spiritual Warfare Strategy to counter attack the enemy. I understand that it is only priests who may Exorcise through the anointing of their sacrament of Holy Orders? Some lay people may have the gift of deliverance whilst some may be "violating/abusing" this ministry. Request/Suggestion please: To appoint one/two/?? group(s) to pray specifically for this intention: that the Church, in Australia and the whole world, may come to know and believe that Jesus has truly won us salvation and that every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus. Luke 4:16-21 (RSV), 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read; 17 and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." 20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Jn 14:12-14, 12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than

these, because I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it. You may have a better strategy and I accede to whatever you decide but please, please pray specifically for all those involved in the occult (both perpetrator and victim). Thank you for your kind attention to my request.
I think God is asking us to grow in love, tolerance and understanding of all people, especially this most in need of help and compassion. I think God is also asking that we take Gospel values to heart and have daily 'conversion of heart' so our daily life become more Christ-like and strive to be 'the heart of God/Jesus on earth'.
To be a more human, humbler, less clerical, more inclusive Church—"a Church which truly reflects the person and values of Jesus" (excerpt taken from article by Bishop Pat Powers)—Really says it all!
To be supportive, caring and honest with our consideration, compassion and love for all members of our community. We are blessed to live in a country like Australia and we need to display our gratitude through sustainable action and constructive empathy for those less fortunate.
Be kind, be patient, be just. Our society would be a far more beautiful place if we could just keep these three things in mind, not only during our day but when dealing with others. Love one another as I have loved you. We all make mistakes. Treat each other with love and care and the sad world we live in today would not be our reality.
After spending 10 days in prayer at the Immaculata Mission school this summer, I strongly feel that the Holy Spirit desires us to have increased Eucharistic adoration and devotion to the Rosary in every single parish, as well as attending Mass more regularly—weekday Mass times that better reflect the hours of the working population would be greatly beneficial (8:30am-5:30pm weekday Mass times are rarely practical for workers).
I think God is asking us to be good.
God is asking us to consider the youth in our churches.
I think that God is asking us to assist anyone in need as there are many of struggling Australians during this time period.
to follow in his footsteps and to be like him
—He is asking that we all care about each other. —We don't harm each other. —All come together as Australian community. —Peace, happiness and health.
To be good people who do not cause harm to others in any form: verbally, physically, sexually, and emotionally. To look after each other and make our families a priority.
To reconsider the direction and positioning of His Church and how and by whom that can best be achieved.
I believe that the Spirit is asking us to open our minds and hearts in honesty and sincerity to discuss the issue of Mandatory Reporting under the Law;—i.e. that a priest is bound to report the

sexual abuse of minors when it is told in the Confessional. That silence and collusion is not acceptable.
I would like there to be Mass offered in all parishes on Sunday evenings. There seems to always be Vigil Masses available but not always Sunday evenings. I think in today's society, Sunday Mass in the evening would be beneficial to working parents and young adults as in the working week, they could make use of Saturday evenings for recreational activities such as going away or important family parties, and still be able to go to Mass easily in their own parishes.
I believe God is asking of us to be true to our calling to be Christians and to be the Church for Australia. I believe Australia needs to see the Catholic Church as a choice for people who are searching for something in their lives. I believe the Church has lost a number of people over a number of issues, the main one being the cover up of sexual assaults. This needs to be addressed as a failure of our Church and continue to admit to the errors, and never cover this up again. Further, I think for the Church to be seen as an Australian Church, we need to consider who we have as priests. I understand there is a shortage of priests, however bringing priests from other cultures can cause problems in the parishes in which they are placed. There can be language barriers and cultural practices which do not suit the community. If we are to continue to bring priests in, we have to ensure we do not make the same mistakes we made when we sent missionaries to other countries and to our Indigenous communities. Rather we should ensure these priests have the correct information and training in enculturation so the communities are not having to experience the Church from another part of the world. I have experienced the priest treating the community differently and as their 'helpers', and being considered as 'lower' than the priest. I believe this hurts the Church and can turn people away, who, like me, never experienced the pre-Vatican II Church. I do not want a Church is moving towards conservatism; we need to be a Church looking forward with joy and love. One thing which disappoints me at Sunday Mass is hymns which only the choir knows, which are played at a speed which has no life and no joy. Let's use simpler hymns, which everybody can join in and learn quickly.
For young people to open up about faith.
To enjoy our environment, but also take care of it. E.g., Re-usable resources and saying no to animal cruelty. To be considerate to those who are struggling. E.g., Homeless, poor or just simply lost.
To be grateful for everything we have, and be nice and caring to everyone.
To be accepting of everyone e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, LGBT, etc.
To be resilient and tolerant, to be kind; helping others in need. To take care of our environment; creation to have understanding and compassion, to always try our best in what we do and to live to our fullest potential.



RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2

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

QUESTIONS FOR PLENARY COUNCIL

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

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

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

1. Can priests be supported in their preaching with training, resources, technology and mentoring?
2. How can the senior leadership of the Church in Australia include more women? Indeed, why can't women be "some part" of the Bishop's Conference?
3. Will the bishops engage a representative laity from across Australia to discuss and confirm the best means to engage the laity to be enacted to carry out those decisions relating to bringing people back to the Church?
4. How can the Church become more relevant to those Catholics still practicing, those marginalised, those not connected at all and those totally opposed especially due to previous issues e.g. clerical abuse?
5. How will we engage youth?
6. How is the Church to rebuild respect in this country?
7. Why do we continue to run the Church in an outdated/rigid manner that does not encourage anyone to have a practicing faith?
8. What initiatives are we doing to actively encourage people to come to church?
9. What new codes of conduct are going to be implemented to safeguard children and other members of the Church from sexual abuse and to protect people from speaking out about their truth?
10. How are the marriage laws going to change so that couples who realise that they made a wrong choice are protected from shame and discrimination by the Church?
11. How are you going to control priests from giving homilies that discriminate against people in same sex relationships?
12. When is the Catholic Church going to be gender equal in all areas?
13. Why is Assisted Reproductive Technology discouraged?
14. Since Australia legalized same sex marriage, how will the Catholic Church in Australia respond if our children are being taught about same sex marriage?
15. How can the Church in Australia protect our young children?
16. Will women be allowed to become priests?
17. Is it possible to make it non-compulsory to do the Religion in the HSC at a Catholic high school?
18. Can Masses be more interesting and not boring?
19. Are the ideas we produce going to be reflected upon in church?
20. Why are there no female Church leaders and why hasn't this been fixed yet?
21. Will gay people ever be accepted?

22. How will the faith of the Church continue?
23. Will there be clearer explanations of the Gospel readings?
24. Will church on Sunday go for less time?
25. How will we get young people to attend church?
26. Why are more people losing faith in the Church?
27. Why is the Church not as relevant as before?
28. How will the Church change to keep up with the ever-changing society we live in?
29. Why are other religions frowned upon by Catholics?
30. How is the process going to benefit us and make us grow together as one?
31. Why is the Plenary Council trying to change the Church in Australia?
32. How can we engage all the different religions in the Church's Masses and teachings?
33. Are you going to do anything to have more inclusivity for the community?
34. Will the Church finally focus on the inclusion of all peoples, regardless of identity factors, and teach judgement is for God?
35. Can we increase the amount of money donated to charities rather than building churches with gold and marble—could that money be better used?
36. How could we help other less fortunate countries?
37. Is there a way to make Mass less structured and serious in order to allow more participation from the audience?
38. What is our role in the Plenary Council?
39. Are we going to introduce female priests? Future for LGBTQ+ in the Catholic Church?
40. How do we develop a want to be Catholic instead of a 'force' from family/ tradition?
41. Young priests? Priests able to marry?
42. What are you going to do to help the community?
43. What are you going to do to keep attention from the youth? How are you going to address LGBT+ issues as well as homophobia from the Church?
44. Will the LGBTQ+ community be more respected?
45. Will the nature and agenda of Masses and sermons every be made more interesting?
46. Will the Church every have equality? (Will women be properly accepted and be able to preach? will gays be accepted? etc.)
47. Will the Church ever justify its beliefs and the origin of religion?
48. Why do some Catholics hold such prejudices against groups?
49. Does the Catholic Church call upon us to be fundamentalists and to practice even the extreme teachings of the bible?
50. Will the Church in Australia remind us of our commitment to live as Jesus asked, according to the Commandments?
51. How can we increase the responsibilities of the laity?
52. Can we look into allowing married priests in Australia?
53. How can we work more with other denominations to share the responsibility of ministering to God's people?
54. How can we focus more on families, welcoming them and involving them?
55. Can we move with the times?
56. Can we loosen up the rules and regulations?
57. Why does the Church have so much money & real estate when it is supposed to be helping people less fortunate?
58. How can the stereotype and shame surrounding religion be removed?
59. How can religion be made more open and a more common topic of conversation?
60. Why is the Church so afraid of change?

61. Why is there so little tolerance for people who are different or do not believe what you believe?
62. If the Church values equality then shouldn't females be allowed to be priests as well?
63. How do you plan to encourage young people back to the Church and their faith?
64. How do we utilise lay people to have more roles from the level of parish to the diocese?
65. Given the behaviour of abuse and cover up, which is different from what we've always been taught and told, how do we see the Catholic Church as anything different from any other organisation now?
66. How is the Church going to rebuild trust among Catholics and the broader community?
67. How is the Catholic Faith being presented to children?
68. How are Catholics being educated?
69. How are the values and morals of the Catholics in Australia being upheld?
70. Why if optional celibacy was acceptable for 1000 years plus is it not acceptable today?
71. Should an Ombudsman be appointed to have authority over all religious in Australia in regards to the outcomes from the Royal Commission into institutional child sexual abuse?
72. Should we consider ordaining married priests?
73. What can be done to let people know that the Church is welcoming without having to change the nature of the Church to please people?
74. What does the hierarchy really expect of lay Catholics?
75. How do we successfully and authentically rebuild and renew post Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse?
76. How will the Church show acceptance and support for all members of the church community? e.g. homosexual parishioners
77. How do we address the declining numbers of priests?
78. Can we move towards new models of leadership that allow priests to marry or be female?
79. How is the Church going to respond to the way in which technology has taken over our kids' lives?
80. How can we make Church and God relevant to all people today?



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

I like many other Catholics, walked away from my Church in my 'middle' years. Towards the end of this time 'in the desert', I sought the practise of meditation and it was through this practise of pure prayer that I found my way back to my Christian Catholic community, and for the first time in my life was able to truly celebrate our liturgy.

We are of the Silent and Baby Boomer generations and have recollections, if not personal, of the guilt that many of us carry, particularly in regard to contraception, divorce, harsh treatment at school (supposedly for our good), just not being good enough and yet many of us have persisted with Church or have had cause to return but bearing hurt and pain. We live with a burden that our sin is deemed vile by the Church yet are also told that our loving Lord will forgive us any time we repent and without penalty of isolation from the sacraments, not forgiven and not allowed to re-marry in the Church, the excruciating pain of applying for an annulment. We fought wars and came home broken and emotionally damaged. Our thanks were rules from a Church that made our reenlisting in civil society very difficult and with no real effort to guide us down a patient path to recovery and a joyous family life and the love of Our Lord. Our children, while not really understanding our plight are the generations of well-educated and not subservient to instructions from a Church which seems unable to explain in "language" understandable by these generations what they can or cannot do. Freedom of choice has broadened and is fuelled by the Neo-liberal Capitalist society and the Media, both Social and promotional, in which we live where we are besieged by "advertisements" offering greater happiness. The vile actions by clergy and others against not only children but more recently the defenceless aged have shown a new low in the reputation of the Church and other organisations responsible for the care of the vulnerable. This is a time for healing... of the Church and of its members and for gentle evangelisation to exhibit a new caring from the Church through its Laity. Instead of hearing the words of Our Lady whose appearances to people are well known, yet the message She brings of prayer and persistence seems to fall on deaf ears. How do we come back to the Way of Life that Our Lord taught to his Apostles, all working men, not an academic among them? ... Yet they were guided by the Holy Spirit to build Christ's Church and pass it on to following generations who, with the help of the Holy Spirit, will teach all nations to the end of time. O My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

As a principal in a Catholic primary school for 25 years, I have become increasingly disillusioned by what has gone on in my diocese ([-]) in that time. In 1986, I was working in NSW public schools. During that year I had many chats with the principal of our children's primary school (a [-] brother). In 1987, I moved to the Catholic system. I remember clearly that principal saying, among other things, that the Church was going to have problems unless it changed its stance on having either/both married priests/female priests—a wise man! You see the problem now is, not only that the average age of clergy is increasing at a rapid rate and numbers decreasing inversely, but also that in my youth (CYO days) we had young priests who connected with the youth in the parish—they

understood them and reacted accordingly ... Sadly, two or three generations have passed and we now have those generations 'unchurched'. This will continue. Also sadly, I believe that unless the Church modernises itself—and this can only be done via a drastic overhaul of Canon Law—the chances of drawing back those mentioned in my question above and keeping people like me (who still practise) active. Canon Law CAN be changed but only in Rome. I ask the bishops of Australia to present to Pope Francis recommendations that will lead to these changes so that ALL Catholics will be brought back to those two essentials—LOVE GOD and LOVE ONE ANOTHER. I pray for your success. Regards [-].

I used to be a Sunday Catholic. In 2003 I was made redundant from my job. The first day home, I asked myself what was the most important thing I could do. As if from above, the answer that came to my mind was the most important use I could make of my time would be to attend Mass. Since then, I have been at Mass daily. I was employed soon after, but kept attending daily Mass. Except for illness or travel, I have been blessed to take part in this wondrous sacrament every day.

Two stories if I may, the first, being mine. I became Catholic at Easter Vigil Mass 1999 (funnily enough, so did my sister whose story is below). After a cursory education in faith in my early years, I came to long for more in my life as I grew older. I attended several different churches until I agreed to go to Mass at my local parish along with my husband. As soon as I attended that Mass, I felt at home. The parish was welcoming and the Mass was meaningful. After my conversion, I found there needed to be more ongoing faith formation. I felt alone and left to drift. I could have drifted away, like I see a lot do and that would have been easy. But I stayed and ended up many years later facilitating Alpha, attending Bible study and a book club. My faith is a crucial part of my life and I express it in many ways. One key point here is that once we do have new converts we need to work to keep them engaged as well and not simply let them drift away. My sister who also converted at the same time has had a much different time than myself. Not long after joining the Church, her husband left her for another woman, was very aggressive toward her and their 3 children. She was tormented by him for many years after. Whilst she initially found comfort with some local nuns, she soon found the judgemental sermons about single parents, divorced people etc. to be too much. So much so that she felt very excluded and not welcome. She was advised that she could no longer take communion. Whether that is true or not, it resulted in her leaving the Church. She may attend with me at times if I ask her. She won't take communion. She does not attend on her own. She still has faith in God, however, and so that is a blessing. She has very little faith in the "institution" purporting to "teach the good news" and support the laity. The Church has lost her. That was preventable and I think ties in to my thoughts about the clergy teaching about a God of mercy and love. The Church does that to far too many people. The Church should be building the Church and not sending people back home.

I believe many who have fallen away see the Church as hypocritical, telling them they are sinners who need to repent and seek forgiveness from the Church (a priest at reconciliation) while at the same time the atrocities perpetrated and concealed by so many members of the Catholic Church have recently been brought to light. I believe the Church needs to be clearly seen to be rectifying these wrongs and helping to heal the wounded/make right, for the Church to seem credible to any outsider. We cannot judge others, yet we have so many rules, requirements and restrictions on them coming to the Lord, and receiving Him in the sacraments (i.e. 'divorcees' receiving communion). As Jesus said Himself, "let he who has not sinned cast the first stone ..." and "woe to you teachers of the law, you close the door to the Kingdom of Heaven in men's faces, yet you yourselves will not go in, and neither will you let people in who are trying to enter!" Jesus asks of us ALL basically 2 things only, to believe, and to love one another as He loved/loves us. The Church hierarchy has gone off track with these and made faith into a very complicated, restricted, and hypocritical business which people are frustrated with and remaining away.

Our children have left the Church. We seek ways of keeping the young ones motivated to go to church and to nourish their faith.

I was once was asked to attend a "Life in the Spirit Seminar". I wasn't very interested but to satisfy some people I attended it with the purpose of getting them off my back. The Life in the Spirit Seminar asks you to open yourselves to the Holy Spirit. To say "Yes", to the Holy Spirit. The sacrament of confirmation is given to you when you were still little and your parents initiated it for you. But as an adult, you can say "Yes" to the Holy Spirit. Do you want to be baptised with the Holy Spirit? (St Paul). At that seminar, I said "Yes" to the Holy Spirit and a profound change came over me. I started reading the Bible. I witnessed miracles and saw the signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit. But I also saw the manifestations of Satan in people. I attended a week-long seminar in delivering ministry and ministered with exorcists. I experienced the full spectrum of our faith. It was like the window of my faith had been opened wide. I now have become very aware of the great battle between good and evil in our time. But I have also become aware that the Church has not prepared itself well for this battle and I sometimes get the impression that the attitude of the Church is, business as usual. Why can't we have in our parishes a ministry of healing? People should be able to share their story with specially trained people and receive prayers for their afflictions. We in our Church, through Jesus, have received the power to heal people from their burdens. This is sometimes called "Inner Healing". This Inner Healing can lead to a good confession. The world is in great need of the peace of Jesus and we in our Church can give that peace. Don't let us hide our light under a table but place it where everyone can see it. For much has been given to you and therefore, much will be asked of you.

As a 'relatively young' person in today's Church, I have been disillusioned for much of my adult life concerning the Catholic Church and how it remains rigid and old fashioned in their practices and views. My faith stems solely from my personal experiences, mainly negative ones, where I cling to have some hope and purpose that is greater than offered in this world. I totally agree that just because society demands it, things should not automatically change and we need stability through consistent teachings—however, nearly everyone I know finds the Church irrelevant and offering them very little inspiration. I encourage my 7yo son to have a faith and he attends Mass occasionally and goes to a Catholic School—however, like so many other children, he finds it boring and not at all giving him a reason to attend or participate.

My faith experience comes from a wonderful Catholic father and an Anglican mother, who could only be married at the side altar in [-] cathedral.

I fell and broke my back (the vertebrae in several pieces) and I was in excruciating pain, couldn't move. I tried so hard to get up, the pot was on the stove cooking, the phone on the other side of the room, cell phone. Also, all I could think was the house would burn down with me in it as no one could hear me. I began to pray. I've always been bossy with GOD, so I told HIM HE had to get me up, then I called on all the saints I could think of to intercede on my behalf and help get me up. THEY DID! Bent over I shuffled to the stove and switched it off, grabbed my cell phone. Then shuffled onto the bed from where I called my son, I asked him to get me some pain killers, but was not even able to lift my head to drink water as the pain was immense. When the ambulance arrived, they had to heavily drug me so they could move me to take me to hospital. GOD came good for me when I needed HIM. May HE be praised, honoured, thanked and glorified.

I was attending a Pastoral Council meeting at our local church and the subject of us being without a priest when our priest retires was raised. A number of issues were discussed and the subject of Deacons assisting in the parish was raised. The question "can a female become a Deacon" for which the immediate reply was "No". The table discussed the merits and opportunities for women to become Deacons, which was, in the opinions of most present, more likely to increase the number and quality of candidates suitable to become Deacons. My direct question to the Plenary Council would be "If women were permitted to become priests and Deacons, would the decline in our Catholic institution be reversed?".

I am a cradle Catholic who has always attended Mass. Thirty-one years ago, I had a personal experience of Jesus. This had the effect of "the penny dropping" accompanied by a deep sense of coming home, even though physically I had never left the Church. I have come to see that although

my heart yearned to be closer to Jesus I was unable to follow through with actions. Up until recently I was involved and serving in my local parish. I love Jesus and His Church, it has been very difficult hearing false teaching and witnessing bad pastoral practices from some priests (in my personal experience most of the parishes I have been a part of have had wonderful, faithful priests). As a lay woman without any university degrees in theology as well as being older and a non-academic, I personally feel that I am part of a forgotten generation in the Catholic Church who is considered no longer relevant or whose ideas, hopes and dreams are not important. However, I also know without any doubt that this is one way the good Lord is refining me. I am learning to repent and forgive even more deeply particularly as I am being blessed by a humble and Godly priest from another parish. By the way, my husband and I have been married forty-four years, have raised seven children, have never had money or influential friends and at different times, have taught pre-marriage courses and have also had the honour of preaching at outreaches to the lost and broken.
I have run formation and participatory activities available every week but find few Catholics have any interest or that the numbers quickly drop to the usual same handful. We sometimes get more non-Catholics participating and having an active involvement.
Often sitting in Mass, the readings are read poorly by people who seem to be reading it for the first time without any inflection in their delivery. While some priests are good at delivering the Gospel and Homily, the increasing reliance on Asian priests who have difficult accents detracts from receiving the Gospel message. I often think it would be better to perhaps have a suitably qualified person prepare the homily, but someone else, who is good at delivery, present the homily.
I would like to thank many of my fellow Christians who have helped me to be the person who I am today by their examples of faith-filled loyalty, dedication, perseverance in their faith journey. I Praise God and Thank God for these cosmic travelling companions for their trust and faith in God our Creator.
I started my teaching career very late, at the age of 50. I was very fortunate to have had my first practical at a Catholic school with a compassionate, loving principal and some faith filled teachers. Through this experience, I myself was inspired to embrace the Catholic faith and have been teaching in Catholic schools ever since. But as a practising Catholic I would like to see the Church undergo some changes to transform outdated thinking to enlightened revelation.
Sense of judgement felt by young adults who don't go to church. This deters them from going—message that they aren't welcome comes across. More involvement by way of music or youth activities helps them to stay connected. Faith education needs to be revived—this benefits adults as well as children.
Seeing the face of Jesus when assisting those in need.
Recently I was Godmother at my nephew's baptism and felt that the priest was very unwelcoming and rude. He did not engage the family and guests. It was meant to be a very special day but I felt like he did not want to be there.
Growing up, I was always involved in the Church community. We did a lot together but I feel the community spirit is not there anymore.
1. Experience of Church. I lived in a small community that had 3 Christian churches. Due to the unavailability of clergy, Mass was said in different church on alternating weeks; Uniting, Catholic and Anglican. The community and clergy were accepting of everybody, everybody was Christian, nobody was excluded because they were a different sort of Christian, we all believed in the same God. There was community, it was a fun and friendly place, the priest used to come to our house for dinner. Then we moved and started attending a new parish in [-] and it nearly killed our faith. The church was exclusive and unwelcoming. 2. Anglican churches in the [-] area have packed service, attended by parishioners of all ages, with modern music and bands, they engage children, are inclusive and invite non-believers to engage with them in events like Christmas carols. Women also lead their services and are inspirational.
I was born a Catholic but 5 years in a Catholic boarding school managed to bash any true belief out of me.

I had stopped going to church until my children started at a Catholic school. The spiritual formation there led me back to church and deeper faith.
I left the faith in my early 20s and was involved firstly in Protestant and then in New Age/pagan beliefs. It has been good to come home but I wish I saw more fire and passion from the congregation and more interest and curiosity in reading the Bible. I wish there was also a stronger sense of community as I feel I could come and go to Mass to and I'm not sure anyone would notice.
Any experience of Faith or Church do you have to share. It is sometimes difficult to put into words as to what Faith or Church means to us. For myself, it is a deep felt, knowing that God is present in our lives, and in our Catholic Church. But we must not be deceived into thinking it will always be so. There will be times when our Faith will be sorely tested. Three words to remember at these times. Prayer, Trust and Perseverance.
I am a "cradle Catholic", reared as such by family and school. I am part of a wonderful faith community in my parish and know this is a great blessing. I am also gravely aware this is not the case for many other "cradle Catholics". I have 5 adult children, all professionals, all good and productive people in their home and working lives. I have 21 grandchildren, all Catholic school educated. Very few of all these adults are still involved in faith communities, though several have walked the Camino pilgrimage and will support Catholic based charities like Caritas. When asked why they would not consider attending Mass the response is "one needs to leave one's brain at the door!". It is very clear the atonement theology and the language of the Creed and other prayers needs to be urgently addressed. Enough of all the Catholic jargon!
To persevere and be strong in our faith when criticised. Faith is a gift but knowing Jesus needs prayer and reading the gospels. Following their faith is hard for young people—nurture them by getting them more involved.
This event happened when I was 17 years old to 33 years old. Fast forward in the future that young boy became a young man with a lot of challenges in life. The older we get, the more responsibility we have, the more stress we have, the more problems we have in this world. The more we are exposed to negativity, almost every morning we watch the news, listen to radio or read the newspaper or website, they are all bad news because bad news sells in this world. There was a point in my life when all I get from this world is negative. My parents quarrel when I get home, I gained weight and ended up in the hospital and later found out I have diabetes. I have to live with 5 injections daily in order to survive, I suffered panic attack whenever I am alone, even going to the mall or to the church, I would get panic attacks. Whenever it gets dark and rains heavily, I would get panic attacks. Even walking outside, I would get panic attacks. My life was full of anxiety and fear. As a young man, I avoided relationships due to the fear of rejections, so I lived a life fearing love also. I also avoided going on holidays because I fear flying on an airplane. My life was just full of fears. There was a hole in my heart, emptiness. I would buy material things for myself just to fill that emptiness in my heart. But unfortunately, material things will never satisfy the human heart. During that life of fear and anxiety and thirst for material things, God slowly reminded me to find my way home to him. There was a time when I was in my usual habits of buying things online (ebay addiction) that I came across an advertisement for world vision. I decided to sponsor a child and I close my ebay account. When I attended my high school reunion, I fell in love with my classmate. Even though she told me that friendship is all she can give, I was thankful that God found a way to remind me that love was missing in my life. A few years later, I fell in love with someone at church, although this one turned out the same. I was disappointed, I felt envy. But I prayed only for her happiness and I prayed to God that I don't want to Envy. I prayed for the first time, asking God to find me a life partner. Just a year ago, I found a Christian Book and I learnt more about what the finish work of Jesus Christ in the Cross. I started listening to sermons and reading the Bible daily. I started feeding on the Word of God. The root of all my fear was death but Christ Jesus conquered death through the cross, the truth set me free. Only now I understand the bread of life and also his blood that redeem us. I started flying again and I meet my fiancée overseas just a few months ago. I am 34 years old now, never had a girlfriend before. But with God's grace, I will be married this year. I

exercise and manage to lose weight and no longer need insulin injections. I listen to sermons and have a Bible app on my phone, I spend time on the word of God daily as I travel to work by train. That is all I can say.
I don't feel included as a welcomed member of the Church.
I used to go to church on Sundays and participate in church in primary school and high school.
My beliefs and actions.
Call to action—sustainability, environment and social justice.
Call to action—social justice and sustainability.
Fundraising, Campaign/movements, Charities, Posters.
The Catholic Church has made me feel welcomed.
It's welcoming and inviting, and Church gives us a sense of belonging. It also helps our spiritual being.
I grew up as a Catholic. But recently I had decided to follow Buddhism as I strongly believe in their values and beliefs.
Accept others for who they are— - We should no longer accept gay conversions. - Everyone should be accepted into the Catholic community.
- Help children recover from past trauma to help suicide prevention. - Stop the raping of children in the Catholic Church. - New techniques in regards to the teachings to make it more relevant to today's society. - Fighting for equality. - Gay marriage should be accepted.
Gay conversion churches, LGBTQ safe.
Completing sacraments, praying, attending a Catholic school being an altar server. POINT OF FOCUS: A call to action regarding sustainability (wastage, pollution, global warming) and social justice (child labour, human trafficking, homelessness, poverty, women's rights, unfair work environment and pay).
Be more fun.
I have attended church a few times. Every time, gospels and the explanations confused me and I felt as if it went for too long.
Teach children that there are other Christian denominations and just because you were baptised as a baby, it doesn't mean you're a Catholic/Orthodox/other Christian. To be a Christian, you actually have to believe in Jesus Christ.
- Singing hymns.
Long Masses that don't make sense, Religion classes I don't understand, Religion assessments so big and long that it's hard to complete.
Holy communion, singing hymns, confession.
The Catholic faith has saved me from years of bullying. I transferred to a Catholic school halfway through primary school, and that ended the bullying. Catholic schools have helped me that way.
I enjoy Mass but sometimes I can find it a bit boring as it doesn't draw me in much, so maybe if it was more interactive, it would be more interesting.
- I do not attend church outside of school. - I attend Mass at school. - I also pray in and outside of school.
Gathering as a community to contribute in singing hymns.
Knowing that God is there with me provides me with comfort.
I have grown up at a Catholic school since I was young and as the years go by, it gets more tiring than exciting.
I love being part of the Church. I have done a lot of reading on the Church Fathers and I love the traditional Mass. [I] used to go to the city as it's awe-inspiring and gives great honour and glory to

God. It is through the traditions of the Mass and Church and the Eucharist I love the Church and thank God for his Graces and mercy that he saved a wretch like me and I have experienced his presence in the blessed sacrament and in confession, his true presence, love and mercy.
» In the Philippines, I always enjoy going to Mass during the Christmas holidays because I often see relatives. » Still in the Philippines, after church there were always people selling things such as necklaces, bracelets, rosaries and in particular this guy selling roasted peanuts.
At most Masses, the homilies are often hard to understand and don't make much sense.
When I was younger and went to church, there was a kid's group that I always really looked forward to. After a prayer and talking about Jesus, we would play a game or do a fun activity (such as tie die shirts).
I love Christmas and celebrating church during Christmas, I think that it is such a special Mass to attend to and so many people come which makes it even better. Personally, experiencing this annually is very special but I think that if church was like this all the time, I would be more likely to attend church more frequently.
The church I go to is Orthodox and we have extra special ceremonies at Christmas and Easter with food. The Catholic Mass for me personally is drawn out too much with only the songs kind of being good.
- Will there be changes to the curriculum that benefit students in Catholic schools in religion in the near future? - Should religion in schools be compulsory. - In the future will we be able to learn about more about other religions before senior school?
- African church experience was very welcoming with more upbeat songs and an interesting Homily. - Homily isn't easy to understand at my church [-] [-]. - Songs need to be more upbeat.
How will you make it more relevant to today's society, more engaging and get people involved?
At Christmas time when the church is always full of people gathering to give thanks.
- Make more engaging and involving - Relate to problems and issues here today.
Liturgy in primary school was fun and engaging as it was shaped around us and was easy to understand.
In [-] ([-]) they make Church inclusive with everyone there at the time and involve the community in all of the activities that the Church contributes in. I would like a more inclusive Church and Mass if possible. Like communion or confirmation.
The content is boring and outdated. It has no relevance to our future. Repetitive and boring.
Are you going to make the environment more inclusive? How are you going to persuade the youth to go to Mass if they find it irrelevant and exclusive?
I have no past experiences with the Church outside of school, however throughout school, I believe the liturgy and religion classes are boring and unentertaining and I could fall asleep in them. We struggle to make sense of what is going on throughout the procedures and to make sense of the point they're trying to get across. It just makes no sense and seems to be so irrelevant.
- Catholic primary school. - Masses. - Reflection days. - Catholic high school. - Meditation. - Religion subject. - Pastoral care.
- Meditation in church and Religion times leads us to reflect on Catholicism. - School liturgies and Masses are too long and the content involved is getting a bit old and boring. - We need to be taught and shown more relatable content in Religion Classes.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion in school shares experiences of faith through many different religions, clubs, campaigns, teachings and in Mass. - In many schools, the religion classes each year share learnings and stories about the Church and its faith of the Church. - Church is all about the Catholic teaching and not some other religions. - Homily should be relevant to the younger generations and make it more intriguing for them and us.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The songs in the Catholic Church are sometimes boring and would be more interesting if they were upbeat. - Homily should be easier to understand. - Christmas church is very lively with many people, good songs and more interesting. - Morning Teas organised by the church are great.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Mass and liturgy. - Meditation in the church. - Study religion at school. - Should be optional to participate in Mass and activities. - Repeating the same stories each year gets boring. - Masses are too long.
<p>Mass is straight up boring. The priests or someone else needs to make it more appealing towards the younger community. I think if the aim is to get younger people to come in, there needs to be some appeal or direct motive to get us to come. I also believe that when it comes to divorced women and men who are getting married again and they wish to get married in a church, they should be allowed that opportunity. Under certain circumstances, it isn't fair to say no.</p>
<p>Should religion be compulsory in Catholic schools? Is it necessary? Why don't we learn about other religions until year 11? Are we being forced to conform and participate in a religion we may not believe in? Is this too old-fashioned?</p>
<p>Will they change the structure for certain people to make them want to go? E.g. church for young people, families and people who don't particularly enjoy church to make them learn to love it.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think that the church and Mass are enjoyable for younger citizens? - How can we simplify Homilies to create a better understanding?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make it relevant to today. - Can they be more accepting and inclusive of people who are not the typical 'traditional' Catholic?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different cultures change the way Masses are run but they all have the same fundamental values. - Primary school Masses were more understandable. - Make Mass more interesting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different cultures changes the way Mass is run. The way Mass is run changes from country to country. - Primary school Masses were more inclusive and had a much simpler structure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-expression should be more open in the Catholic Church.
<p>I was born and raised Catholic but identify as an atheist. The Church definitely needs to be made more relevant to today. Religion has always seemed restricting. My mum believes that everyone who has cancer is a sinner that deserves to atone for their sins. The scripture is vague and contradicts itself.</p>
<p>I honestly don't know because I don't want to be involved with this. I have lost all trust in the Catholic Church as within it, I have experienced a lot of discrimination for being gay. I actually really liked religion before I came out and really enjoyed the Bible (mostly the New Testament) but a few opinionated people have ruined my whole perspective on Catholicism and the Catholic Church.</p>
<p>One story which has shaped me is a personal homily from a priest which taught me to be a more loving person and to have faith and trust in God.</p>
<p>Mass could be more enjoyable as sometimes it is boring as it becomes repetitive each time I attend. There could be more participation in the Mass, to make Mass less boring so people can become more engaged when they attend.</p>

I have been a part of the Catholic community from a young age, received all sacraments available to me at this point, and have attended church innumerable times throughout my lifetime. I think the Church service needs to become more relevant to the community and today's society. Mass is too focused on structural elements rather than the actual underlying meaning of attending church.
We discussed changing the language to make it more understandable for people who don't understand.
Make it more relevant to the audience, bring things up that are relevant to our generation, make Mass not so repetitive and long as young people lose interest.
I think that sometimes during the Mass when there are large chunks of speech, it can be easy to switch off and feel unengaged. I do however enjoy listening to the orchestra and choir.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extended homily. - Less hymns. - Address more relatable issues during the homily.
I have grown up being Catholic and receiving all my sacraments and going to Catholic schools and I understand the religion but I think there needs to be a lot of changes made within the Church to be more with the times. More relevant and relatable to our modern day, I think the Church is stuck in old ways and habits that no longer fit in our society. This is what draws people away from the Catholic Church.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More people need to be involved and engaged within Mass in their school or community church. - Some of the Masses that are held at school are repetitive but each speech that is said is unique and the atmosphere of the community is always significant.
I have experienced that since I do not follow the faith, that I have been looked down on in a way, and I think that the Church should be more open to those of different or no religions and to stop forcing us to participate in their religion if it is against our morals.
I think we should change the language used to allow more to resonate with it and understand. We should not place so much pressure on being internally good, and allow people to understand that making mistakes is ok. We place too much pressure on being like Jesus that I feel it is setting to high of pressure and expectations, it is hard to love all and I think that the Church needs to understand that with modern day society, people's lives are becoming busier and people should be able to feel as though even if they don't live a life like Jesus, they shouldn't feel guilt, or condemned or as if they are not welcomed into the kingdom of God because of it.
More participation and relevance towards youth within Mass structure and the religion curriculum. The homily to sort of be withdrawn the religious aspect of Mass and to become more relevant.
The little charities and organisations part of the Catholic community are what I'm thoroughly involved and interested in, which has shaped in what I like to do and what I believe in. However, when going to Mass, the homily and the scriptures said does not interest me that much due to how they convey their message.
I like our religion teacher; she's nice and makes the lesson fun. I've been christened before. When I go to my church, it's fun and I enjoy it because it isn't traditional.
School Mass is very structured; however, the most interesting part is homily as the bishop tells stories to students allowing them to relate and engage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are too many hymns sung during Mass causing people to lose interest. - Mass times are often awkward and many people cannot attend due to a range of activities. - Priests usually do not understand current issues the teens and young adults of today are facing.
I chose to not attend the church services purely because I believe it has become too much about God and the past rather than the people and the future. Yes, you are trying to mend that now, but why? Religion is dying out and you need to grasp any strand in the hope of keeping religion prominent. Maybe no religion is the future of tomorrow, you forcing us to answer these questions is not the way. Let us choose where we want to take my beliefs, not force me to have a view point. I go to a Catholic school and yet almost my whole year are not practising Catholics, religion isn't prominent in our life anymore and it's not an issue, it's the future.

How are you going to make it more relevant to society today and how are you going to get younger generations to participate?
Consider involving the students more, when stating the homily involve the students more, this being throughout the Mass also. Consider the priest as he conducts most of the Mass, involve the students as they will appreciate a more permanent role in the Mass.
I feel as though religion is pushed and very forced on us. I hope that the Church can make the homilies and stories more relatable to people that aren't fully Catholic and people that don't particularly believe in God and more about the morals behind things.
Why does religion feel like it is being pressured upon us, and there is no room to spread individually? Religion is not seen to be as a spectrum but instead seen everything one way or the other.
One thing from the Catholic Church that has shaped me would maybe be the discussions about the meaning of life, conscience and morals. It made me understand and think more for others and myself about what I should do and what I think I want in life.
I enjoy going for Masses at my local church. Being an altar server at my school has given me a great opportunity to serve God and people.
Mass is repetitive. Some people find it great and for some, it is boring. We don't know if the source is true and if his story or if he is real.
Why is the structure of Mass in this way? What does it represent?
One time I went to church to make gingerbread houses and before we made them, we have to join in on a prayer and I didn't really like that because I just wanted to make my gingerbread house for Christmas.
Many of my friends have left the faith as their idea of Catholicism is that they discriminate against LGBTQ people.
I would like to understand the father more because I never know what he's talking about.
I attend church every weekend and most times I listen and understand the homily. However, I would hope that at some point, priests discuss everyday problems we all face and how to get through them through the Catholic Faith. This would help us younger individuals to understand and take something from church.
Since I'm Muslim, I go to a mosque and at the mosque. Us Muslims, we go and we wash our face 3 times, clean inside our nose 3 times, we wash each limb 3 times each and we wash our hands 5 times before we ever step foot into the mosque and when we go into the mosque, we grab a praying mat and we put it in the direction of either the sun or moon (to God/Allah), then we have a priest that either stand in front of us and prays with us or he/she is either reading the Qur'an into a microphone coming out of a speaker where everyone and I mean everyone can hear it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I feel like they try to push religion onto us too much, even though we go to a Catholic school, it can be a bit too much sometimes - Religion can be very extreme at some times. - This council should look at all the cultural minorities of Australia and include them into this survey. I did not like the fact that I could not put Macedonia into the survey when I had to answer what country my parents were born.
I have always been atheist and since I attend a Catholic school. I would prefer I could take a mandatory subject other than religion.
Mass can become quite boring for this age demographic, we want it to be more exciting for us.
I have not had many experiences with the Church, but the few times I have gone to church it has been very welcoming.
Despite being atheist, I was born into a Catholic family and have attended Mass and been confirmed. When my Grandmother died recently, we had a beautiful funeral Mass for her, and though I did not believe in the God the priest was speaking to, I found myself greatly comforted by the reverence of the ceremony and the respect with which my Grandma was spoken of, knowing it was what she would've wanted.

The fun and music should be more engaging for our generation. Mass can sometimes be boring, so it would be better if the music and fun was uplifting. This will help the Catholic Church stay alive and also because our generation is changing, the Church should as well.
This is [-]'s story ... she is the delight of her grandmother. [-] is a 19 yo Uni student doing a double degree in Nursing and Paramedicine. In her spare time, [-] belongs to the Campus Youth Ministry at her University. The opportunity came, and [-] took on the joy of being part of making a difference in the lives of others especially young people. This is also a way for Sarah to challenge the way of life given her by her family who are committed to their faith. [-] says "she is excited to be surrounded by positive people who believe in the things that I do. This helps to sustain my faith in an increasingly secular society. God is always looking out for people to let Him into their lives." I am so excited to be working with other Youth Ministers and young people in the Year of Youth who have a similar vision and outlook on life to me. I am even more excited to be sharing my faith with students as a Youth Minister and giving more young people the opportunity to learn about God's love and to have a relationship with God. [-]'s quote ... "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" ... St Paul to Philippians 4:13.
I once was told to be in a pair with a girl I didn't know, we didn't have any friends in there, so we didn't really have a choice. But now we are pretty good friends.
I go to church every year at Christmas.
I go to church to open my mind.
Should we bring back people getting dressed up for it as it is a special occasion to celebrate God?
I always think about Mass as a big community gathering as one as I remember my first Mass in year 5 when I changed to a Catholic school and even though I wasn't Catholic, I felt a part of a community, something special and from then I knew I wanted to be baptised.
I used to go to church every Sunday, and I still go most Sundays today. We had a very nice and kind priest who had very special connections with everyone in the church community. Last year he retired and that just made us realise how lucky we were to have such an amazing priest with such special connection and friendships with everyone.
I have been singing in church choirs for 75 years. I did belong and I still belong. I contributed to making the high Mass a true celebration. The church was a place where you made friends. Other denominations are far more socially friendly. They meet after Mass in a proper hall. A much better solution than the cup of tea which is sometimes offered in the church porch or outside on the grass. Make true friends, not be just shaking hands with a smile and 'peace be with you' sign.
Spending some years working, firstly as a volunteer and then as a member of staff, in a remote Diocese has certainly widened my understanding of the Church and all that it encompasses. We need to be more mindful of the need for missionary efforts in our Church here in Australia, as well as overseas. Often, the local/national needs are overlooked as more emphasis is placed on international needs.
(This was a large group so I will do my best in sharing their stories) One couple in the group travel very often and have found that all over Australia, there are reduced numbers in all Catholic churches that they attend. Sometimes, the Mass isn't even on at the advertised time and in the outback, often one church building is shared among a few Christian denominations. Another gentleman mentioned his frustration in reaching the priest when needed. His story was of a robbery and he had a difficult time locating the priest. The older people in the group agreed that priests are not as available as they use to be. It was suggested that with less Mass times, the priest would be more available and would need to travel less. One lady in the group mentioned that she lives in a nursing home run by the Uniting church and finds comfort in their church services and has been supported in difficult times by ministers of other denominations, when the Catholic priest is unavailable. All agreed that the youth and young families are the future of our Church. With fewer families in the congregation, there are fewer priests of the future. One mother mentioned that youths are most comfortable with people of a similar age—and young priests make a huge difference to young people (in particular her children and their friends) in feeling a sense of belonging in our church community. One lady spoke

of priests (more than one) that she has known over the years that have left the priesthood to marry. Another lady spoke of how in her native country (Germany), many priests father children and that allowing married priests might help us to retain the priests that we have and encourage others to be priests. All but two in our group of 9 were in support of the possibility of married priests. One lady also mentioned that her encounter with a female priest in the Anglican faith was very positive and because of that, and the great work that our religious women do, she is in support of women priests or deacons.
At our wedding, we were told we weren't able to have any other music in the church apart from Hymns. Shouldn't the Catholic Church be celebrating the choice we made to exchange our vows before God, rather than placing outdated restrictions on us?
I met a protective divine mother spirit when I was lying on the grass. The top half of her body was behind my head. She was a grey shadow with dark pink roses all over her. Her energy was safe, loving, warm and protective. It was a very special privilege to meet her. This experience was one of the reasons I changed from Protestant to Catholic a few years later. I wanted a Church that acknowledges the divine Goddess St Mary.
How my church's priest is more interactive and confrontational with the homily and the gospels read.
Nuns are really great. And amazing.
One priest I believed was my favourite priest was a young priest who found fun in everything. He made the weekend Masses engaging but soon had to fly back overseas. I didn't attend weekend Masses after that because the Masses were no longer engaging for me, more like a chore.
At School Masses, there is a great sense of family and God's love. The Masses ensure that everyone feels welcome, supported and loved by God and Jesus.
The Church community is supportive and acknowledges all members: St [-] High School in [-] do a small Mass every year in November that acknowledges the members of the school have passed. My aunty is among those and the Mass is a way of acknowledging her whilst being surrounded in a supportive community of family.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Church is often repeated and the layout of the Mass never changes, there is not much development to personally interest those attending. - Catholic schools still conduct tests and assignments to test our knowledge of the Catholic faith—but I feel that religion is a spiritual process and involvement should not be marked. - Masses and chance to listen about faith is often just an excuse to get people together. The objective of Masses is never to just spend or develop our closeness with the faith - but rather a graduation, a school lesson ...
A while ago, I went to Sri Lanka and while I was there, I went to a church. It was rather interesting to see the different customs in churches. I was then able to compare my normal church experience to places around the globe.
When visiting an Anglican church, I enjoyed the atmosphere as the room was filled with the younger audience, more singing, I felt more engaged with myself and what was happening. It was more of an informal social event, rather than a sit down, silent, Mass.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language used in scripture is old and confusing. - Mass should be more engaging and interactive rather than formal and repetitive (maybe more like an African-American Mass, where everybody is passionate about being there and involved/engaged in what is going on).
Just participating in a funeral and it really opened my view on the Catholic Church and God in a positive way.
One positive experience I had was the grad Mass. It was great to see all of our year twelves included and the hymns that were sung were common so everybody could get involved and sing.
Baptism, Confirmation, etc. not by choice; by force I wouldn't have done it if I had a say in things. I couldn't care less about any of this.

<p>I have had amazing experiences of my faith and I have a very close relationship with God. But I have been let down but my school and my parish. I attend a private Catholic school, [-] college. In school, I have found most people including teachers to be lacking in faith or even against it, as well as with a very negative attitude towards it. In my parish, there is little spirit. I have found my faith in a charismatic Catholic community which encourages outstanding love and devotion to God. We need to always be filled and surrounded but the spirit. This is not found in silent and still parishes and school Masses. I value quiet devotion immensely. With intense love comes respect. In our education system, we do not learn the reality and importance of our faith.</p>
<p>Considering how the traditions of the Catholic faith are so traditional, is the future of the Church in Australian dependent on change or having ALL the traditions stay the same?</p>
<p>When I was younger and visited my family in Chile, my grandfather who was sick would wait for the priest to come to his house and bless him as he could not attend Mass and receive the blessing from the priest. Home-visits from the priest for my grandfather were very important.</p>
<p>I find that church would be a good experience if it was short, straight to the point, and the scriptures were understandable. In my high school I find Masses too long to the point that we lose concentration as to what's going on. If Mass was shorter and used words we understood I think it would be more enjoyable.</p>
<p>At my primary school ([-] Catholic primary school [-]), the chapel was so small that the school would have to split in half and go at different times. It got too hot that kids were fainting.</p>
<p>Masses are boring and most find them depressing They are based on old people not the younger generations of the world even those held at schools. They are uncomfortable at different Masses and topics each time/year rather than the same stories and the same messages every year. Can we bring food in because everyone gets sooooo hungry and bored and we neeeeeeddddddd food to live? Can we have songs that don't get stuck in your head for four years afterwards? Legit we don't need amen ameeen ameeeen amen amen for five hundred years stuck in our head. Everyone gets bored as shit and brings pens in to draw on their arms and legs to fill the time or makes paper airplanes out of the booklets given.</p>
<p>I've been lucky to have attended a church for most of my life that has been led by an excellent Order of priests. For the most part, they speak with optimism, encourage progressive thought and have a pragmatism about life and faith that is gentle, at times humorous and almost always relatable. Because of this experience, I have a positive feeling towards the Catholic Church and I'm grateful for that. But I don't agree with all of the teachings or the attitudes of the Church and I feel ashamed of the connection between the Church and child abuse. My hope for the Church is that it can become a Church that when people, both Catholic and non-Catholic, think of it, they have to acknowledge, because it has been made irrefutably clear, the capacity of the Church to show humility, to act in great love and to grow and change.</p>
<p>The Church pushed women and other groups into pigeon-hole positions and enforces it. It's not an inclusive environment, there's no transparency in leadership, and there's minimal involvement in law enforcement.</p>
<p>I have had many negative and positive experiences but one I wish that I never had was the experience of faith at a Catholic school. Of course, there are students like myself that are religious but I could only name a few. I don't know how they feel in the inside but what they display on the outside is a collective hate for the education system and have developed a distasteful attitude on the Catholic Church. I understand that you go to a Catholic school and are expected to follow the proceedings for example Mass. I was so excited to go to my high school ([-] college, [-]) but I was unexpectedly naïve. I did not realise that there were going to be groans and sneaking things into religious events. I did not understand why they would bring in earphones, food and paraphernalia, for example, vapes to distract themselves from what you are trying to spread which is the message of God. I can surely tell you now the things that I have seen been brought into a holy place to my hearing the word of Christ were shocking and disgusting. I would have never imagined the things they would do to avoid and stop everyone from learning the message because and I quote from a</p>

peer 'the priest is probably a rapist and what they are teaching is boring and shit.' This made me upset as the horrible things our Church has done has already defined the young girl's opinions.
My daughter moved to a country town and went to Mass at the cathedral. One Saturday night we accompanied her. I was appalled! It was dark, musty and uninviting. The priest droned on in a boring way. I wondered what was there for her. She continued to attend for a few years and, recently she told me that not once has anyone in that church even said 'hello'. I really don't expect her to continue attending. That experience has made me consider why I turn up every week, but I know that I have a strong sense of belonging in my parish and I would have a sense of loss if I stopped attending—but how much of that is habit?
Sadly, after being in a parish where 2 priests have done so much damage by their arrogant behaviour; where they have demeaned the strong volunteer women in the parish; made life incredibly hard for the parish secretary; causing 60 percent of parishioners to leave (that is factual, not a guess); I have now witnessed a woman in her eighties, a very significant and involved woman for many years in the parish, deciding not to come to Mass or be involved in the parish but to just have her quiet relationship with God because she is so demoralised by the way these two priests have treated us and the lack of care for our parish by the bishop. Then one of these priests has been promoted to [-]! Something is seriously wrong.
One of my cousins was in a coma for a very long time after being hit by a car and to support her, our family prayed and raised money to support her and her family.
The first time I had a blessing at Mass at school. I was really worried that I would do it wrong because I had no idea what to expect. It was a worthwhile experience, as after I did, I actually felt part of the Church, even though I am not Catholic. I now do it all the time.
I have been flower girl at two different weddings both at churches, and I thought it was beautiful witnessing it all happen, especially at the churches.
- How are you going to equip members of the Catholic Church in Australia to deal with criticism, questioning, debate and backlash in regards to their belief? - How will you continue to encourage the involvement of young people in the Church?
I only got an education through the Catholic Church.
School Mass.
- Confirmation was the confirming of my religion and faith and made me feel a sense of identity in the Church.
I had a great experience with the Church and Faith in 2018 during ACYF. But, I struggle to understand the Bible and see how 'kind and compassionate' Jesus is. When I read it, he comes across as blunt and, in a way, rude.
Sharing liturgy with schoolmates brought a sense of unity and faith among us.
- Walking around Winsor castle church and looking at the statues, paints and readings on the wall was an experience of faith.
Visiting places around Europe such as Spain, France, Macedonia and Dubai and seeing churches and mosques from different parts of the world was an amazing experience.
I went to a funeral at a Catholic church for the first time and it was a special but sad experience.
An experience that I've had with my faith; my friend was in a motorbike accident a year ago and we all prayed for him and he recovered.
The spirit and festive feeling around Christmas time. At the funerals for my uncle and my grandma, there was a spirit where all individuals mourned together for the loss of a loved one.
Growing up in a generation where Religion is slowly dying and becoming more and more outdated, I never really had a good church experience as in primary school, we were forced to attend Mass every Wednesday, shaping my personal opinion on Mass and religion from a very young age. It got me less interested and motivated to want to participate in my faith, resulting in me being agnostic today.
My experiences in Masses have been conservative and traditional, although beautiful, can fail to consider the future generation's desire to be actively involved.

<p>- At Year 12 Retreat, we had a liturgy where we could choose what group (ministry) we would like to be involved in: music, reading, prayer space, etc. The girls became passionate and had fun and it made me see faith rather than girls who have a basic stereotypical idea of faith.</p> <p>- Faith for me is something that has changed and will continue to change as I grow and have more experiences.</p> <p>- I am an altar server, reader and Eucharistic minister. I really enjoy being involved and it makes me feel more spiritually involved in the liturgy.</p>
<p>There are many experiences I have shared with God. One main event was at ACYF. During the adoration I was amongst 100's of other Catholic Australians. I felt a sense of unity and support. During this event, a gold cross was being carried with the body and blood. Whilst everyone was praying, I felt a strong presence of the Holy Spirit and God. I was with two of my friends and had the best time that even made me very emotional.</p>
<p>My Scripture teacher yelled at a student which made me a bit scared when I was 6.</p>
<p>In general, the Church has taught orthodoxy, rather than orthopraxis. Learning "correct" words and beliefs provide important information, but they do not necessarily lead to an "experience of faith", nor help to change our selfish behaviour and attitudes. Being in relationship—with God, with people, with our world—is what really changes us—and in my experience, the Church has focused far more on what correct beliefs we should hold, rather than on helping us to truly experience spiritual transformation. This is why I believe contemplative prayer needs far, far more emphasis in our parishes.</p>
<p>- Mass/Liturgy, boring and long.</p> <p>- Don't have any ...</p>
<p>- I see the Church as a judgemental place where for some, being themselves will not allow for them to be accepted.</p> <p>- I feel like adherents of Christianity try to force their religion and their beliefs onto others from my experiences.</p>
<p>I just find that in Mass I feel closest and most connected to God through the hymns as it allows me to get on an emotional level, and feel God's presence with me and in the community environment I am in. I also feel as though the breaking of the gifts is when God is with us most at Mass and it is a really special and sacred time that brings us all together.</p>
<p>In Italy, I attended a Mass at St Peter's Basilica and although I didn't understand what they were saying (it was in Latin), it was amazing to sit in a room full of people from all over the world and yet feel strangely at home. The togetherness was so spiritual.</p>
<p>I'm a Catholic who was Christened as a child. I do not attend church regularly as I do not find it engaging, if it weren't for attending a Catholic school, I would probably not attend church at all. I find the Church to be very exclusive and hurt others, yet it is not what God would want, which turns me off as well as the outdated nature of the Church. I once attended a Mass directed at youths which I really enjoyed. I find the concept of God difficult to understand with all the suffering in the world.</p>
<p>I have been going to the same local church for as long as I can remember and whenever I go there, I can always feel a sense of community and family.</p>
<p>I enjoy the music and singing, being with my friends, and the happy vibes.</p>
<p>In Vietnam, the church service was so beautiful that my mum went too. I used to go to another church, but after we changed, we found the [-] church so much more welcoming and fun to be at, I actually really like going now!!!</p>
<p>I attend church only a few times a year, mostly in school and once around Easter and Christmas... I also attend Anglican church with my baby cousins more often and since I have started taking them, I have felt closer with God—as I have seen different views that sometimes agree, sometimes oppose with what I have grown up with.</p>
<p>I am not Christian, but I admire some of the Christians I know for their kindness and understanding towards me and my religion. However, on numerous occasions, I have encountered "Christians" and "Catholics" who are very racist towards me once they realise I am Muslim. These experiences</p>

sometimes make me feel unsafe in Australia to practise my religion. At school, God bless them, they have provided me and the other Muslim girls with a prayer room, which shows the variation between people in the Christina faith.
Will females become priests? Will priest become married to be exposed to more human experiences?
Family leading congregation in song during Christmas. Outside station of the cross re-enactments. Travelling: Sistine Chapel, St Paul's Basilica.
My experiences have not been positive. I remember going to a pre-confirmation day in Year 6 (2013) and as an atheist, I was just attending with my class. The priest holding it was screaming at us about how we must love God with all our spirits, and if we didn't, we would burn in hell. He went on for about half an hour about how he would never look at us again if we didn't commit to God and how we were bad people. We were 11–12 years old and I remember crying. I still can't look him in the eye as he is still my high school priest. I feel like the Church needs to be more forgiving to non-Catholics in our increasingly secular society.
In the Church in America, speakers are more compassionate about what they believe in.
Being a part of the Portuguese community.
Attending Church in Italy, watching the Pope give his homily in the Vatican, there was a sense of community. People had travelled from overseas and country wide to watch him and we all felt connected because despite the fact that the Pope spoke Italian, his homily was given in a wide range of languages, each for the languages the Pope himself knows. We all felt a sense of belonging there.
My brother went to boarding school in Sydney, he graduated this year, when I went to their school Mass and heard 1200 boys singing loud, passionate (especially their school song in Italian) made me get goose bumps. I think music and engagement, and the drive and attitude of wanting to be there is very important.
I had an experience of attending Hillsong and their service answered a number of my questions showing me that change is OK.
One lady mentioned that she went to an Anglican church service years ago and thoroughly enjoyed the service. She was welcomed warmly and found that the service involved the whole congregation. She enjoyed the sermon and the music was a highlight as they had a range of musical instruments, not just the organ. After the service, she left feeling energized! Another lady shared that where she grew up, Christians were the minority so all the denominations would work together to make a combined youth group. This worked for the betterment of everyone as youth want to be with other youth, and they feel happier in a crowd of like-minded youth. It helped to have a combined project, rather than everyone doing their own thing. A gentleman mentioned that serving God is an opportunity to unite us, not divide us. We must be honest and loving with each other and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. An elderly lady shared that she often joins with people of other denominations in prayer services and that she gets so much out of it. She also receives support from the pastoral support team, which is run by the Uniting church and is very grateful for it. I shared that I have worked with people of other faith traditions in our local Public Schools to encourage parents to enrol their children into Scripture classes. More and more, parents are not choosing Scripture or are allowing their children leave their Scripture class for Non-Scripture. The growing number of children in Non-Scripture is a problem for all Christian SRE providers and also the schools, who are struggling to supervise the large numbers of students. I often speak to coordinators of other Faith Traditions on how to best deal with a problem or opposition to SRE at schools. We often speak at kindergarten information nights and support each other in school meetings. Combining for Christmas concerts and Easter liturgies is also a great way to pool resources and work together to allow the Gospel to be told, not just to those in Scripture classes, but in some cases, we have been able to invite the entire school to our concerts and liturgies. Working together has become necessary in schools that often carry much anti-religion sentiment.
Attending a Catholic high school, going to church since when I was a kid, going to funerals and visiting churches in Europe as tourists, especially in Iceland.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sicilian churches with beautiful arts and paintings, etc. - My school's graduation Mass is beautiful - Youth group camps where everyone's individual beliefs were expressed.
<p>Being involved in a Catholic community at school allows me to connect with God. It also has a great sense of community when we have Mass together.</p>
<p>When I travelled to Italy on the school trip we attended a Mass in Latin at St Peter's Basilica and afterwards, we went outside joining hundreds of people, gathered and waiting for the Pope. It was so heart-warming and empowering being surrounded by that many people who share the same beliefs and values. Although I am not very religious, being greeted by the Pope made me feel more connected to my faith.</p>
<p>I have no connection to faith or the Church. Went there as a kid because I had to but it never engaged me. I wish I could have been but it just isn't the case.</p>
<p>I am a regular parishioner. When I moved to the area, I had started to attend church regularly. The parish priest did not notice. A fellow parishioner noticed that I had come along on a number of occasions and made a big effort to welcome me. Church is ALL of the components. I had been on the verge of changing churches to see if another would be more welcoming of newcomers. If that parishioner had not made me feel welcome, I probably would have ended up elsewhere. Instead, I stayed and have made a considerable investment of my time in the liturgy and children's liturgy rosters. Parishioners need to feel valued and included by the community that they join. Father [-] is very good at doing this.</p>
<p>I lived without faith (trust in the ways of God: confidence in the Church) for decades—indeed for most of my life. A Christian friend (not a Catholic) invited me to his church to attend a service. At this time, I was very concerned about a mentally ill son who had disappeared overnight. I feared that he might have self-harmed, perhaps even suicided. I prayed for his deliverance during that service; then afterward my friend advised me "wait and see what happens". I drove towards home and barely a block away from the hall where their service took place, there was my son walking home from the railway station. I stopped and gave him a lift home. At this point, I could see just how faith really works for the first time in my life. At the following service, my friend also said something that has stuck in my mind ever since. "We come here because we all want something". I had never viewed church attendance as being a matter of enlightened self-interest until that day. I was raised and received my school education in the old authoritarian, dogmatic, pre-Second Vatican Council Church and attended Catholic schools. The way to heaven was always depicted as one of shouldering a set of tiresome obligations "if you do not do this and this and this other thing", "you will die in a state of mortal sin and your soul will suffer an eternity in hell" was the sort of message we got from the nasty teaching nuns in junior primary school. And our ecclesia is still probably bemused as to why people brought up as Catholics leave the Church? My Christian friend had delivered me a POSITIVE message appealing to my enlightened self-interest and exercise of free choice in contrast to the servility and negativity that my painful Catholic education and upbringing was steeped in. Eventually that church folded and my friend moved on to another church. But with hindsight, that man was probably the guiding angel that I needed at this time in my life. Eventually, I decided to try out our local Catholic parish church which my wife attended. I consulted with the assistant priest who turned out to be very wise and he guided me back to a full trust and confidence in God and reconciled me with the Catholic Church. My parish ([-], [-], NSW) is run by the [-] missionary order of priests. It is considered the most vibrant parish in the [-] Diocese. Since I began attending church there, I have witnessed a turnover of several incumbent parish priests and they have all been inspiring, helpful men. A contrast to some of the patently uninspiring (and uninspired) dullards I often encountered elsewhere. In the parish where I dwell, I truly believe that the Holy Spirit is present. I have not gained the hindsight impression that the Holy Spirit is either present or anything like as proactive in all of the Catholic churches I have attended in the past or that all members of our Catholic clergy are necessarily being guided by the divine presence.</p>

I have witnessed many young people with faith in God turn away from the Church in shame and horror following the revelations made in the royal commission into sexual abuse in institutions. And also the Church's rhetoric in regard to marriage equality and the treatment of gay, transsexual and other people. I have been fortunate to feel faith in God throughout my life. I have felt great comfort from God's presence.

We see a Church governed by men who have little experience of the world, many of whom are educated in the seminaries to consider themselves on a higher plane than mere mortal lay people. Our children ask—Mum, why do you work so hard for the Catholic Church when women are not treated as equals? Young people ask—Why be part of an institution which doesn't celebrate and involve women? Why support a Church which hides from its crimes against children and fails to sign up for compensation... the victims did nothing wrong... Church needs to wake up. As mothers, how do we answer our children?? This situation must change.

When I was preparing for marriage in the Catholic Diocese of [-] Canada, it was mandatory for my wife and me (fiancé) to participate in a marriage preparation course. I had not been a regular Mass goer, and my wife had no religion at all. The discussions by the priest and visiting couples were very interesting covering various topics. One night, the priest talked about the historic timeline of Judaism and Christianity. I found this fascinating. For some reason, seeing it all drawn out gave credence to our faith. Another week, he talked about contraception and natural family planning. I didn't understand the Church's stand on contraception but found NFP quite interesting as a way of avoiding chemicals and possibly aborting our child. I became intrigued and started to read up on some of this material. I was being challenged in my thinking, and I obviously didn't know much about Catholicism. I remember the priest being so full of conviction and obviously knew what he was talking about. It was the beginning of my conversion. I had been raised in Catholic schools all my life but had never been exposed to these ideas and I certainly had never been challenged like this before. That priest had a Massive impact on my life. He provided a springboard into my life of faith. An authentic Catholic priest changed my life. He was willing to speak the truth. I found out later from a friendship that developed from someone who knew the priest that most of the response (they had us fill out feedback forms each week) was VERY negative, but he knew that a few people are open to the truth. He just had to deliver the message. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to that priest.

I am a happily married man and extremely active in my local parish. I feel that I have more that I can give but I wouldn't change my life so far to become a Deacon.

I along with my siblings attended Catholic schooling as did our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. When I was attending school, we would be involved in our church, taking part in readings, prayers of the faithful, flower arrangements, etc. We were given tasks to help us take responsibility and we learnt from a young age as did my mother that you were to be polite, respectable and help out your fellow person. You learn to become a part of a community and not just go to Mass for 1 hour a week.

When I lived in the country, we had a parish priest that everyone knew. He was a gentle man and I never heard him say a bad word about anyone. If you went to him with a problem about someone (and we all knew everyone), he would explain that none of us really knew the 'other's' story. It is hard to cope with hostility, criticism, betrayal, etc. but we do not know what their life was like to make them like that. He didn't make the problem go away, He invariable asked us to pray for the person but he gave us a new way of looking at our 'problem'. He made no attempt to fix the problem but rather helped each of us to look at ourselves and see what we could do to help ourselves cope with what was going on and often that actually changed the person, me, in particular, and the situation became bearable. One of the worst instances was telling him that I actually Hated someone, he told me that hatred itself was not so bad as long as you did nothing to manifest the hatred. Hatred of someone else, without action, harmed me! He asked me to say a prayer for that person each day, not for them to change, be kind, see my point of view, that I could like them or any other motive but simply say a prayer for them. It was very difficult at first but I began and after a while, it became easier. In the end, it was quite easy and I found that the hatred I bore was gone.

<p>When that person died, I had a very strange dream that didn't make any sense. After Mass one morning, I stayed in the church to pray and ask God what it meant. I heard a voice within my heart that said that person never had an upbringing that taught him about God and that he was in purgatory and had no one to pray for him. I was asked to pray for him to be released. I did that for several months and the following Easter during the services when I was praying after communion, the Lord gave me a vision of him smiling and walking towards me looking much younger than he was when he died. I knew then that he had been released to heaven. I have been exceptionally blessed in my life to have had people of great faith lead me ever closer to God. He has graciously called me to go on mission expeditions and I have witnessed his great love in healing miracles in both western cultures and third world countries. My faith is the single most important thing in my life even though I love my husband, my children and my grandchild very, very much.</p>
<p>I am not Catholic, but I want to a Catholic scripture class in my public school. The Sister wanted to visit my family and I was concerned for her wellbeing. My family home was anti-Church and abusive. This beautiful woman visited my family then continued to welcome me into the scripture class. My life continued to have struggles but I had become a woman of prayer and witnessed God move mightily in my life. I am so thankful that God planted her and other Christians in my life and had a rescue plan for me.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong Catholic family (upbringing/role modelling). Wanted to help others and thought I could do this through becoming a Sister of PVVM. 2. Mother was a strong believer and follower of the Church. I'm one of five children who actively attend church. Teaching in a Catholic school has kept me current and God in the front of my mind. 3. My family was always involved in the Church.
<p>As a teacher of adolescent students, it is challenging to teach what the Church needs me to teach to a disconnected/questioning audience. There needs to be a change, whilst still upholding the Catholic integrity.</p>
<p>Everything is feeling like a farce and a sham. Masses in our parish feel more like staged pantomimes. The priest sprouting nonsense but pretending he knows everything, when in reality he has no life experience. Articles are written in publications well before events have happened so you get a "happy feel" report but in reality, the truth about the actual event does not get reported. Everything feels manhandled and manipulated. People in our parish are forced and coerced to do things and there is heaps of grumbling but as soon as the priest shows up, it is "yes Father, no Father, whatever you say, Father" and the whole event is a sham.</p>
<p>Until recently, I have given most of my life to working in my parish and diocese both in a voluntary position (music/liturgy/youth/adult education) and in Catholic Education. I am totally disillusioned with the lack of Gospel vision displayed in much of the Church hierarchy and will no longer work to support it. Sadly, unless there is significant and urgent change, I will no longer support it from within the institution but will seek out other intentional communities to live out and support my faith.</p>
<p>I was married in the Church to a non-Catholic 45 years ago. I consider myself a Liberal Catholic with an Irish background, educated at a Catholic boarding school. I practise my faith and have a music ministry in my local church. My children have Catholic partners and my grandchildren attend Catholic primary schools. The Church can and does in some ways replace the extended families of the past. My friends are mostly Church people, essential to me now and in the last 40 years. The faith community has sustained our marriage and my social life. MARRIAGE. The rocky road of marriage continues to trouble my children, 2 not married, 1 separated couple. These are the ones who need to feel wanted and valued in our faith community, we need to pray for all parents of the future Church in Australia.</p>
<p>Catholic grandfather has not passed on the faith to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren because he believes that his wife, who was previously divorced, is not accepted by the Catholic Church. Husband attended the local Catholic church with his wife for more than twenty years but did not become a Catholic because there were too many hoops to jump through. Non-Catholic member of an extended family wanted to become Catholic but did not know where to start. When her eldest</p>

child started sacramental lessons, the teacher had a meeting with the parents and provided them with an introduction to the Church and the sacraments and it was through this process that she also became a Catholic.

I grew up in a family where my father was Catholic and my Mother wasn't—my Mother had always said that we were free to work our religious beliefs out for ourselves. I had gone to many churches over the years and prayed when I needed to be, faith wise, I was lost. Some years ago, on a Wednesday night in February, I found myself in a Police cell—like all people in this position I was anxious, nervous watchful of what was going on around me, and like everyone else there I was innocent—looking back it now if I had been truthful with myself if I was truly innocent I would never have put myself in that position to be there. The only thing I didn't feel was alone—I was in a cell on my own but I felt someone present sitting with me telling calming me, giving some peace. I felt God's presence guiding me through the position I had put myself in. After a few hours there I was let out, with the statutory court attendance notices, etc. I started after that date attending my local Catholic church. I also started to read the Bible (something now I have done twice). I also started praying. It was a natural progression after many months that I then enrolled to join RCIA a passage in my life I will never forget, in my time in the Church I have sat on endless committees, both finance and pastoral, and have been a Catechist, I now lead a more fulfilling life both personally and professionally and spiritually. Back to where all this started, I was never convicted of an offence but along the way, I have had challenges and my faith has seen me through them all—my wish is that my father could see me now.

I found myself knocked by chronic illness in my prime years. Seemingly the Church had no healing modalities to offer and so I dipped my toes into New Age healing modalities to try and heal myself. This toe dipping was a slippery slope and I soon became immersed in New Age healing modalities in a quest to get better. I got sicker and sicker and poorer and poorer with each new thing I would try. It had become unmistakable to me that dabbling in the New Age was very bad news. I wholeheartedly returned to the Church and fell in love with the healing arms of Jesus. The Christian Church has so much to offer those suffering from all kinds of chronic illnesses. Jesus is the ultimate healer. I would love to see the Catholic Church step up and take its place as the go-to place for healing so that others may be prevented from getting ensnared in the New Age on a journey to heal themselves. The Church offers the healing balm to all kinds of disease roots such as anger, hatred, bitterness and fear. It offers solid and real channels of healing in the form of baptism, anointing of the sick, communion and reconciliation. Jesus offers the way, the truth and the life. And for those suffering from chronic illness, life is what is so desperately sought after. The Catholic Church has so much healing to offer to weary New Age seekers.

I have always had a very strong faith, and my most beautiful experiences have been in Masses, retreats, etc. where things have been kept simple and where you could just feel God's presence everywhere. Unfortunately, today I am really struggling with my faith due to finding out about all the untruths and cover-ups that have gone on in the Catholic Church over hundreds of years right up to this day!

I worked for many years with the Franciscans, in the classroom and the worshipping community. My faith grew in that environment. Then I became unfortunate to work with power-hungry self-indulgent parish priests who resented God as a lover of wealth and power.

My faith in the leadership of the Catholic Church has been shaken. Too many issues seen in the Catholic schools around our area are directly about maintaining the paying population and the money rolling in to [-] diocese without providing facilities to these schools. The schools are run like expensive public schools. Class sizes are above 25 with students with high needs, behavioural and learning difficulties. The teachers deal with the repercussions and our children suffer in these environments. It is obvious the CEO values the money coming in more than the students they have under their care. The fact that our schools do not have air conditioning is unforgivable. Does the CEO building have air conditioning? The Catholic Church is a business, not a place that allows us to grow spiritually. The Church has not allowed my faith to grow, it has done the opposite.

I grew up with a fantastic priest only to have him moved on to another parish (Why???). The priest who replaced him ended up having an affair with his housekeeper and left the priesthood to get married.
At different points in my life encountering priests who have been faithful to the Gospel so that they have been both friend and minister.
As a woman, I feel that I have no valid place in the Church today. I no longer attend Mass because I do not want to participate in a ritual that makes me feel less equal than a man. I am tired of the way the Church tries to explain away my experience as a woman by countering that women are "equally valuable" and there are many roles for women, yet this is not what I see or experience in my reality. I hope that the Church begins to understand this and change its patriarchal structure to be the radical Church that Christ established.
The Church does not always do its utmost to fulfil the Corporal Works of Mercy, particularly in relation to those in prison or otherwise oppressed. Luke 4:18–19 says: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Many clergy feel completely abandoned after rendering worthy service to the Church for 30 or 40 years and get caught up in accusations of child abuse in their early years and rightly or wrongly find themselves oppressed and imprisoned and then abandoned by their confreres or bishops and Catholic friends who never bother to visit them in prison or in exile from the Church. Much more needs to be done for these people.
I was brought up for 8 years in an old Catholic church where the priest (Father [-]) was direct and expressed his opinion on today's issues but related them back to what the Bible states. But as times change, communion is being given out by individuals that are not the priest himself. Church with the music accompaniments feels more like a musical performance than a place of emotions relating to security and warmth. I am having trouble accepting these new practises that drain the attention from the Word of the Lord to insignificant factors that are really insignificant in reality. I now feel bit apprehensive in attending Mass as it is no longer focused on the message of the Gospel but how it is delivered.
Not really—I don't have much. But I will say that I have doubted. I have fallen out. I have questioned. I have also recognised the amazing similarities in their many faith traditions in our country. If we concentrate on how we are similar, not how we are different, we may actually begin to follow the most important commandments: Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.
I would just like to share that as an educator within a Catholic school, it is often difficult to evangelise or re-evangelise families attending our schools when our churches are often forced to share priests and when priests often don't share contemporary beliefs. Sadly, families often turn away from Church because of these things.
My faith journey has spanned 62 years, since my baptism into the Catholic Church in 1956. I have been influenced by several priests and religious over this time. I have grown through involvement in the catechetical ministry, sacramental preparation ministry, Pastoral Council involvement, RCIA involvement, and as a reader for over 30 years.
I have attached my thoughts on the current parish based sacramental programme and its deficiencies.
I have been three years home in Holy Mother Church. I came home via Protestantism. I came home because of Dogmatic Faith. I thought I was leaving behind the confusion, endless debates and Doctrinal Relativism behind. I have discovered to my horror that Dogmatic Faith is not being upheld or enforced. I have been verbally abused by people and even an Acolyte for upholding the Church's teaching with no repercussions for the individuals. I have the Church lacking in its willingness to allow the Faithful access to association and education. I have never felt more alone in Faith than I have since coming home to the Catholic Church.
One lady spoke of her and others' desire to aid the many needs of our Church, such as youth and faith formation. When bringing ideas to the priest, unfortunately these ideas are often squashed. For

some priests, even the smallest idea, e.g. a prayer/faith group in the parish is impossible. This doesn't enable people to live the Gospel fully in their lives and it restricts them to only being able to participate in Sunday Mass. On the other hand, she has seen how an open approach and trust from the clergy enables lay people to play their part in leading the Church, feel a greater sense of belonging/purpose/mission, which allows them to use their gifts for the benefit of others. Priests can't do it all and if they try they will continue to squash good ideas that could be led by others in the parish. Another lady spoke of how society has changed, and with fewer priests we cannot continue to operate as we were 50 years ago. We are all a part of the Body of Christ and that some individuals are naturally better suited to leading ministries than others. Under the governance of the parish priest, trusted laity can and should be placed into positions of leadership for the most effective use of the gifts and resources in the parish. In regards to transparency, she spoke of her generosity of finances and volunteer work being directly proportional to the level of transparency of the priest. She recently came upon a gathering of key lay leadership of the Diocese and noticed that only 1 of 14 was a female! Noting that men and women have different ways of thinking and approaching problems, a greater gender balance will lend to more effective leadership and strategies. One of the men spoke of his experience as a lay leader in our parish. He appreciates the wonderful skills/talents of other lay leaders (both men and women) and the energy and life that they bring to the church community. In his own life and through the encouragement of our priest, he has become much more involved in church life, which has deepened his faith and brought him into a closer relationship with our community. He spoke of an example of being in a parish where there was financial transparency and that when money was needed, everyone gave generously. However, in a parish where there is no understanding of the financial plans leads to distrust of the parish priest and less giving. His experience of a mix of genders in leadership in the military ensures greater possibilities for outcomes as a more diverse group brings broader ideas to the table. A priest in our group spoke powerfully of his experience on this topic of Leadership and Governance in the Church. I've attached his input as I'm out of space.

My mother was abused physically by my father and hospitalised from different incidents. She divorced my father after all of the abuse and him being unfaithful to her. Many years later, she met a new man and they wanted to be married. The Church denied them because of her divorce. Annulment was out of the question because whilst they were married, my brother and I were born and that would make us illegitimate. My mum has not felt welcome in the Church since. Another time I was attending a professional in-service about the Catholic teachings and was told that children conceived by IVF were abominations in the eyes of the Church. I have many friends who are church-going people who have turned to IVF to assist in the conception of their children who are baptised and attend Catholic schools and church weekly. How will these children feel when they learn that they were not wanted in the eyes of the Church? A brother who taught at my high-school was one of the most eye-opening honest men I have ever met and he spoke of the challenges that existed being denied a partner and as a human, being a priest does not take urges away. So much inequality exists in the Church and for its existence to continue into the future, these issues need to be addressed and attended to. We do not live 2000+ years in the past, we live in 2019 and the world has changed. The Church must change too.

I grew up in the bush, with a Catholic father and a convert mother (was a Baptist), and many siblings. We had very little exposure to the Catholic faith other than Mass (Latin to start with) each Sunday. We went to the local convent, and lived there for 2 weeks to have instruction for our First Communion and then Confirmation later. My parents did the best they could and they were good people. We said the rosary as a family sometimes and always went to Mass each week. I then married a Church of England man (who used to be an altar server) who turned completely away from religion. I again was living in the bush, with little access to any education. I taught my children Catechism—as well as other children in the small church—for their First Communion and Confirmation, with a little input from our local priest. Catholic educational opportunities became more available after my children left home to study and work—there was no work available locally.

They attended church with me (my husband did not) until they left home and then they dropped practising, and some have denied God altogether since. As I had only girls, they were not harmed by the paedophile priest we had when they were younger. He was a lovely man who did not get the help he sought from the hierarchy. I eventually left my husband for a variety of reasons, but one was the constant attack on my faith. My faith has been questioned many times by myself, but I firmly believe in the Catholic Faith and what it stands for. As I was not very well informed on my faith, I did not know that a divorced person should not receive communion, and not one person advised me otherwise. My local priests over the years knew I was divorced. My husband died a few years ago so that is no longer an issue. None of my children attend Mass, even at Christmas or Easter, which saddens me greatly. I try to lead by example, and have become more and more involved in my local church, through volunteering, adult education, prayer groups and discussions, Bible reading, Catholic literature, etc. Our priests are struggling under constant criticism from some sectors, gossip and the increased workload they have to bear. It is no wonder they are suffering from all sorts of problems. Even our young priests are feeling the pressure, and we will lose them if they are not looked after carefully. Which would be a real shame as they are constant suppliers of gold nuggets of information about our Catholic faith and heritage.

While on Active Service in Vietnam and under attack, I looked up in front of me and clearly saw my Unit's Catholic priest, Father [-]. I asked what he was doing here and he replied, "I was concerned about you and thought you might need me!" I turned away and when I looked back, he was no longer there!

The Catholic charismatic renewal has really shaped me. Parishes have done the opposite and that's saddening as I would like to see parishes come alive as Jesus intended.

I have been an active Catholic all my life and have a deep faith. I publicly support and promote the Church but at times I find my own faith to be flat and 'going through the motions'. I like the traditions and predictability of the Church but sometimes get frustrated with what appears to be a negative message (i.e. we are all sinful and need to constantly ask for forgiveness). I believe in Jesus' message that the world is a wonderful place and needs to be celebrated.

I am a practising Catholic in a same-sex marriage of 18 years' duration with two teenage sons. I and my partner have been practising Catholics all our lives and are ensuring that our sons are introduced to and experience a living faith. My family is loved and accepted by our local parish and we are active members of that community. We have experienced no bigotry or discrimination and enjoy the best of the Church—its welcome, warmth and inclusion. This loving treatment by priest and parishioners at the grass roots level only serves to highlight the schism between the ordinary day-to-day Church in action and the politicised scandal-wracked, wrong-footed Church hierarchy, which seems so out of touch and obsolete.

I was born and raised a Catholic. I was a student nurse in Melbourne when I met my husband who was a student from Malaysia. We got together and we eventually were married at [-] Church [-]. We had 2 children before my husband decided to return with to Malaysia where all his family lived. We had a child in KL and decided to come back to Australia. My husband always used to hear our children's religious work and he was not a Catholic. We were living in [-] Vic. and one day the priest said, "I see you at church every week but you never go to Communion" and he said, "No one has baptized me" so after a few talks, he was baptized so the PRIEST had great faith in my husband.

Church and Church Groups. I have been very fortunate to hear many people speak of the love of God who also show it in their lives. I've been privileged to take part in small groups where one is encouraged to ask questions of faith from that open place of growth and love. My more recent experience is that questions I have brought have caused resistance and fear when I have brought them. Group members reverted to "Church teaching", rather than be curious and open to the teaching and inspiration of the Holy Spirit who speaks within and through Church dogmatics, but also personally. How deep is faith if it is only a faith taught and born out of fear or book learning? It is surely experience and relationship which sustains us in life, and is worth sharing with others.

I remember as an altar boy in the late fifties at [-] [-] when Father [-] (founder of [-] at [-]) was the parish priest. I remember, homeless and often down and outs would come to the church looking for assistance and Father [-] would never turn them away. After I made a criticizing comment to him in the sacristy, he told me not to be judgmental and that he would give them his clothes and food if necessary. He then told me to stop talking and go out to the altar and pray on what he said. I have not forgotten the lesson.

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.

My childhood was tough. I grew up in a domestic violence situation, a father who was a gambler and who took off for long periods. My mother had a strong faith but she wasn't very loving or affectionate. I attended Catholic schools in various [-] country towns. The first years of primary were not good. The Brigidine Nuns who taught me then were not very compassionate towards my mother's struggling financial situation. One Nun who prepared us for our first Holy Communion, told stories to fill us with fear of a vengeful, punishing God, rather than a loving, merciful God. All my life I have struggled with not being/feeling worthy. I have had to relearn, discard or analyse much of the things I was taught or experienced as a child. A cranky old priest once refused to give me Communion because the Host fell off my tongue onto the altar rail. He said I wasn't good and to go back to my seat. Self-fulfilling prophesy, I went off the rails in my youth and a lot of that was to do with not feeling good or worthy enough because that's what I was told or made to feel. The exception was the beautiful Sisters of Mercy who taught me in late primary and early secondary school. That was when my faith really blossomed and I truly loved Jesus and Mary. No doubt this good experience was what instilled Faith in me which I never lost even when I didn't attend church regularly. When my eldest son made his First Communion, my involvement and experience of that was wonderful and I returned to practicing my faith with love and devotion. My son was asked to read a gospel passage and it had such a huge effect on me that I went to reconciliation and have rarely missed Sunday Mass since. My marriage broke up after 24 years. Fortunately, and thank God, I was able to have my marriage annulled. Several acquaintances and friends who have divorced or separated don't feel the need or desire to get an annulment. Some of them are in new committed relationships. Some still go to Holy Communion but feel some guilt about their situation. Some have married outside the Catholic Church. The Church needs to recognise these people and somehow make it okay for them to participate fully without guilt. I met a lapsed Catholic who had never been married. He returned to the Church before we were married. He is very active in the Church even in his retirement. Another wonderful Blessing! However, he did not attend church for approx. 30 years and struggles to have the Faith that I have. He lacks understanding and knowledge of what the Catholic Church teaches and believes. It would be good if lapsed Catholics had instructions like the RCIA candidates have. My two sons do not practice any religion. They both attended Catholic schools but there was too much emphasis on doing well academically and not enough good religious teaching, practice and experience, especially in High school. Confirmation should be put back until Year 8 or 9 so students have a significant religious experience in high school.

There are no groups/activities that I can go to, to engage me as a young Catholic. I see other denominations offering camps/fun days with a religious focus. I want us to educate as many people as possible—especially the young—about the importance of the environment and how that connects us all to our Faith and God. I love attending outdoor Mass—especially at Christmas—it provides a non-threatening experience to many—not just Catholics. The atmosphere is full of joy and meaning and a huge sense of community. It is also a way of connecting to the natural environment. I always love watching people during the Mass and the great sense of belonging that I feel from this type of worship. I attended WYD recently and received an overwhelming faith experience because I was part of the whole world demonstrating their love for their faith and the community in which they know they are part of. I have been very fortunate through my family, my schooling in early years, tertiary education and my role as a teacher to have mostly positive experiences. I have had

the support of a strong community and a connection with others. My own parish has been without a parish priest for a long time and the temporary priest has had a negative influence on me personally as well as the parish in general—attendance at Mass greatly affected along with falling finances to cover costs. I am aware of other parishes in similar situations with priests who are well beyond retirement. Damage has been done and the road back to recovery is going to be hard—the symbol of the parish priest has to be recovered and families need to feel safe. My adult children, even though having attended Catholic schools and church, no longer attend as they feel a widening gap between themselves and the Church—a real disconnection.

Archbishop [-]'s speech at Bishop [-]'s ordination was great, honest and very powerful (positive). Then no visible follow-on (negative).

- When moving into the area, it was very hard to fit in to the church. Having children at the school helped a lot. We should be more welcoming. Other people have come down and found it very hard to mix. We hear Mass and we go home—on Saturday nights at least. Our church hasn't got a little entertaining area—we need one. We've seen that in other churches and it works. The McCarthy centre was supposed to be like that and it hasn't worked out like that. People make a lot of friends when they can mix after Mass.
- My son's marriage has broken up. They have 3 children. He's having a lot of problems now. I want the Church to accept that he might find another partner—want him to be happy and not live in sin. Help people with broken marriages to get help and support. Help them heal and get on with their life. The process for annulment is too complicated. I want them to stay in the Church. He no longer goes to Mass.
- I think sometimes we are too private. My nephew had a terrible car accident. I feel like people withdraw and then get hurt and don't speak up. Other people close down and don't listen when someone wants to talk about things that they're upset about. There is one woman who's a safety officer. She asks how you're going and really listens, then she gives you a big hug. It's made a big difference to me.
- We need to encourage the young people more. It makes me feel very sad inside that the young people don't go to Mass when they grow up. Even my grandchildren don't go.
- When people have sinned, they have to deal with it in their own mind and heart. We can't impose a fix on them.
- My friends at Mass are very important. They're very accepting and they're very important to me.
- My son always asks me whether I've been to Mass, or if I'm going to Mass.
- "There was a scandal amongst the teachers when my children were at high school. It seems to have affected them terribly and they didn't come to Mass after that."

- Antioch—when my kids were teenagers, they attended Antioch and made many friends. It was great. They've maintained long term friendships with the people they were with in Antioch. It did take a lot of effort from parents to run, which is perhaps why it stopped running as people got busy.
- During the late 60s and early 70s, I was at university in [-] and represented the Catholic students in the ecumenical student movement. There was a lot going on across the different Christian churches, and I've maintained friendships with some of the people to this day. There doesn't seem to be much interest these days in ecumenism from the institutional Church.
- Young people are very attuned to hypocrisy of any kind, as we were when we were younger. They see some of the behaviour in the Church and turn away.
- People have different ways of experiencing God. For example, I experience God in nature and it's been very healing when I've gone through difficult times (e.g. when [my] husband died). We need to understand that people have different ways of experiencing God and offer multiple ways, as well as not judge people's faith by how they experience God. "We're here to love, not to judge".

Pastoral care: Lay people have the authority to take communion to the sick, etc. I, along with the nursing staff at IRT [-], coordinate residents to receive communion weekly. There are about 13 to 15 residents who gather weekly. The sign of peace when the elderly feeble reach out to each other is the most touching time. Under Vatican II, a lay person could get communion if they were working

and couldn't get to Mass. By understanding this (through the catechism I have learnt as an adult) I was able to invite the nurse coordinator to receive communion at the same time. She came back to me to report that after the first time she received communion she slept so "beautifully" when she went home that night. By gaining a deeper understanding of our faith, one can put it into practice in a pastoral sense. One can go beyond that to an ecumenical sense. Two or three of these residents who are not baptised Catholic approached me expressing a desire to receive communion. My spontaneous response was to say, "of course". Twice a year, our parish priest comes to the home to administer to the elderly. On one such occasion, I passed this by him. He said to me, "We are ministering at the gates of heaven" to this community who have faith in Jesus. We can also act pastorally with our grandchildren.

Book club: Friends who were committed to adult faith education 20 years ago still meet monthly. They call themselves "the Remnants of Religious Education" and meet once a month for a book club.

Bishop: Many years ago when the bishop of [-] was being ordained, we opened our homes to a visiting bishop attending the ordination for a couple of days. The bishop was very grand and expected to be waited on hand and foot. On relating a story of sexual abuse in a diocese he led, he pontificated "we didn't know what to do!" My wife was horrified and stopped the bishop in his tracks "If it was one of my boys, I'd do something". The bishop was somewhat taken aback by this confrontation. It was almost as if they felt if they moved the offending priest to another parish, the priest would suddenly stop abusing young children. It was horrible.

CLUSTER: If we came together as a cluster of faith communities, we could generate momentum in the lay people to overcome the abuse. Seize the moment by doing and supporting each other.

- We were talking with our friends about a group out of China calling itself 'The Church'. One of the friends commented, "We call them the 'New Catholics', because their attitude is 'We are the true Church and you're wrong'".
- My sister wanted to marry a divorced man. The Catholic Church refused to marry them so they went to the Uniting church. After that, the local priest refused to baptise her first child, so they came here instead. I also had a gay aunt who wasn't welcome by the Church. "I'm pretty sure there was nothing wrong with these people."
- "In the 1980s, in my formative years, the Church was the priest. So, I wasn't very engaged in the community of Church. It's different for my Mum—she was involved in community."
- I'm the youngest of five from a Catholic family, with a diversity of beliefs. My Mum was educated by the Catholic system and my Dad was educated in his faith by his parents. Growing up in our family, it was a spiritual teaching, then reinforced—sometimes forcefully!—by the Catholic school system.
- A year and a half ago, life was great. Then I lost my wife and felt like nothing was worth living for. Then I looked to my grandchildren, and began taking them to Mass. This helped me to reengage with the world.
- I come from a family of converts and there's nothing like a family of converts to have a lot of faith! My father was a Uniting church minister and had to sacrifice a lot in terms of his belief in its wholeness. The love of my father was fulfilled in church, and was also intellectually satisfying. The Church is as flawed as can be—and we are all flawed. There's room for forgiveness in my way of understanding what it is to be Christian.
- Quote from Oliver Cromwell: 'I beseech you in the bowels of Christ to consider you might be wrong'
- The marginalised—we see them all at Vinnies and we're not turning them away. There are foundations and organisations living Jesus' teachings, and they're generally run by laity.

My experience and observation is that the current sacramental program is a failure. Every year the parish puts 100 to 150 children through the sacramental program, yet we don't see these children or their families at Mass or participating in the life of the community. Continuing to use this sacramental model will continue to get the same dismal results.

My experience in talking with RCIA practitioners and parishioners in multiple parishes is that most priests, many RCIA leaders and parish communities have poor understanding of the RCIA process, how it evangelises and their role within it. In most cases, I observe that it is treated as a knowledge topic curriculum rather than the process that the rite calls for a gradual pastoral formation and guidance in the Christian way of life within the community, by the community through word, worship, community participation and mission. My experience and observation is that parishes use a topic based curriculum within a group teaching environment, limited to school terms timeframe, often from about September or later to the following Easter. The liturgical rites are often ignored or modified to limit the time impact on Mass duration. This seems a very limited understanding of the intent of the rite in its call for the catechumens to hear the mystery of Christ proclaimed and then to decide to enter the way of faith and conversion of heart to Jesus. Fully understood and implemented, the RCIA contains the wisdom of the Church in evangelising to those who are open to God's grace to change their life.

Our combined experiences in this group are that our Mass communities are declining and as they become smaller, it becomes harder to do engage with a fragmented community. Larger communities offer more opportunities for community, mission and lay ministry. We observe our priests carrying enormous workloads to maintain multiple small communities that can be overcome by creating a larger dynamic community.

Each of us in this ministry group comes from a business or professional background and our observation is that our priests are being burdened with administrative work that detracts from their primary functions of shepherd and minister of Word and Eucharist. We believe that there are capable people within the community who can share much of the administrative work. It would be better use of personnel resources to have appropriately qualified laity administering the parish with the priests focusing on the spiritual development of the community. The ACBC could consider commissioning an organisation(s) such as ACU or BBI or similar, to provide a suitable qualification course for a lay parish administrator. We would expect lay parish administrators to hold such a qualification to be eligible for this role.

- Hearing about the abuse has rocked my faith. They've told us to be good and forgive and they're not doing it. What's so special about the Catholic Church now?
- When I was at high school, one of the brothers always stood too close to the students. It was very uncomfortable and students would avoid him. The other brothers must have known he was like that—why didn't they do something?
- Celibacy is an issue: it goes against our human nature.
- When I asked my (younger) family members if they'd like to attend a listening and dialogue session, they said, "I'm not going to those! They stuffed it up, they can fix it!" meaning the Church hierarchy.

Two members of the group were very distressed and relayed a recent faith experience when they attended their 8-year-old granddaughter's Reconciliation. This was at the [a parish] church in [-] and they were appalled that the entire service was in Latin and the priest spoke with his back to the congregation. The young priest was Father [-] and the 30 children got nothing out of it. It was not inclusive but exclusive and ostracised children and their families from the Church. Why is a young priest going back to Latin? The entire group was upset and angry that this would happen in a Catholic Church today—especially when it should be about welcoming children and educating them about the sacraments. This shows the Church as out of touch and elitist. The usual parish priest is Indian who is very hard to understand, so no insight is gained from regularly going to church. There needs to be a universal sacramental program in tune with 8-year-old children and foreign priests should undergo training in English to improve their pronunciation so parishioners can understand what they are saying. Another faith experience was from a former Anglican member of the group who was asked by a parish priest in a large Sydney parish if he would run a children's liturgy at the Catholic Church. He agreed and taught children's liturgy for 7 years to 50–60 kids each week (he later converted to Catholicism). Another member of the group said that you need to know the Old

Testament to be a good teacher in the church and the Anglican's have this over the Catholics and that's what makes them so good a liturgies and sacramental programs. One member of the group used to do scripture teaching before they had books for the programs and they had to make up their own lessons. The parish priest new of an Anglican-based scripture program that explained the Bible very well and this was used to train the scripture teachers and the children. The schools wanted ecumenical programs and scripture/sacramental teachers started talking to adults as well—brought in the families. One teacher was frightened to talk to adults but said it was a wonderful experience talking to these families. Some parents didn't want their children going to Catholic schools because of what had happened to them—their past experience was affecting their current opinions. The programs got lots of families back into the Church and they said that if they had had known what it was like now, they would have been back sooner. You can use scripture and sacramental programs to bring people back to their faith, whereas some today and pushing people away. The last issue raised was the difference between parishes and parish priests—no unity and not operating together. A change in the bishop or the parish priest changes the community—come in and make changes instead of waiting to see what is already there. Observe, discuss and learn before making changes—if it's not broken, don't fix it.

My faith shapes my world and gives me strength and joy to be able to carry my burdens and know that God is always walking along side me through the hard times. It is more a personal journey than one I get from attending Mass.

My experience of the Church in Australia has been influenced by many committed and faithful priests, who have led my family to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, through a love of the Catholic Church and its teachings. The secular world loves to attack the priesthood. My experience of the priesthood has been overwhelmingly positive, and we give thanks to God for the many faithful and dedicated priests who are called to serve.

In the 1980s, I lived in [-] and experienced a church that was very much alive with involvement of laity. It was normal for clergy to go away for a week for formation with their bishop, and daily Liturgy of The Word and Communion were conducted by lay women and men. Today in the [-], there are 3 parishes under the leadership of a Religious Sister. The Sister is leader and administrator and priests from a neighbouring parish visit to celebrate Eucharist on a roster so that each parish has Mass twice a month. The people gather in the same numbers whether a priest is there or not. There is an urgent need for this model of parish to be replicated in other parts of Australia.

When I was 29 years of age, I gave up everything and travelled to the other side of the world to enter a religious community that I had encountered during WYD2008. Whilst my time there was a gift from God and a treasured memory, it became clear during my novice year that I was being called back out to the world, although I did not know why. I left at age 31, never having made vows, and returned to Australia. In relinquishing my name (Sr [-]), my habit, my community, the horarium ... I felt like I lost my identity for a time, and it took me a long while to find it again. My relationship with God took a battering. My confidence, my ability to support myself, my relationship with family ... all took a hit. I still haven't been able to settle in a parish and feel as though I belong and am welcome and can contribute, some 6 years later. I say this to speak the truth, but I'm not a victim here. I've become successful in business in the IT-for-education sector. I've achieved a second Masters degree and am just embarking upon my PhD. I've a beautiful family. Sure, my social life is a little weird—my friends from before religious life, all have families and different concerns now. I don't really have a place in their lives. My friends are all much younger than me now—they're wonderful people in a similar stage of life to me ... not identical, but similar. I wonder about things like marriage and hope this is still a possibility, but who knows what the Lord has planned? I submit this response with some degree of personal experience in the subject—but not from a place of victimhood. My experience in this empowers me to act and inform! Rather, I submit it because I believe there is a real opportunity to do some good and to create a more functional discernment life cycle and stronger community as a result. My thanks for hearing me out on this. I've put a lot of prayer and thought into my attached

submission and discussed it with many women before submitting it. I hope and pray that it makes a difference.

I have had very positive experiences of Church, but then I have always involved myself in whichever parish I belonged to. My mother was the pastoral assistant in my home town and a catechist in my primary school. I can recall her leading lay led liturgies and even burying people when a priest wasn't available. I was an altar server back when the concept of girl altar servers was frowned upon by my big city cousins, but this was because our priest at the time had invited me to serve. In my current parish, I am a lector, an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, I provide IT support and I'm a member of the parish Council. I am also heavily involved in supporting the sacramental Programs in our parish. I am definitely not the only woman involved in these ministries so when people complain that there need to be more roles for women in the Church, I don't know what they're talking about! My experience of Church has not been without controversy, as a number of priests I knew growing up left the priesthood to get married and my home town is part of the [diocese] which was rocked by the [-] orphanage scandal back when I was in high school. Life has also had its challenges—family deaths and marriage breakdowns and yet I have always found the Church, and belonging to a worshipping community, to be very beneficial. I am no stranger to lay-led liturgies. My home town continues to have a weekly service—Mass one weekend/lay led liturgy the next, which is a testimony to the community I grew up in. Our neighbouring town (the town we alternate Masses with), only meets fortnightly when there is Mass. This tells me that parishes decline when there is a lack of commitment from its parishioners, not as a result of a shortage of priests. I love the parish I belong to and our priests. I do worry about their ever-increasing workload though as they try to fill the gaps left by retired priests.

My parents always worked very hard for our Australian Church that is in country [-] when there was not always a priest and when the parish did have a parish priest, we eight children were always instructed to look up to our priest and nuns. We were considered by today's terms very poor, one labourer's wage and eight children in [-] when Catholics were not popular in the work force. My mother who lived to 92 and was a convert always stated that my Dad's faith made her a strong Christian. Even from her pension, she set aside money for the different Religious orders in our town/city and at her funeral there was 1 bishop and 19 priests present to send her to her maker for which she was well prepared. You might consider that I am one of the old school but my faith is strong but will never be Faith. We have moved forward not only with such things as one hour fast before communion but in different ways become more relaxed like everything in life today but the commandment that Jesus himself told us 'Love one another as you love yourself'.

Bishop [-] was the celebrant at my child's confirmation last year. I will never forget his interaction with the children as he called them to the altar and sat with them at the steps of the altar. The way he spoke with them and chatted to them and asked them questions was one of the most beautiful interactions I have seen between a man of the Church and children. He was on their level, they felt important, appreciated, loved and cared for. It was inspiring to watch and a breath of fresh air. This I can imagine is how Jesus would have interacted with Children.

I have been a returning Catholic on several occasions and no longer feel the need to justify or apologise for my lapses. I can never explain why I go to church—it just feels right to me.

I entered the seminary at [-] in 1974. It was a wonderful time in the life of the Church. The optimism and enthusiasm of the Vatican Council was everywhere. I looked forward so much to be able to minister as a priest in a Church that was so vibrant and full of hope. The early years of my priesthood fulfilled that expectation but by the 1990's things had started to change. Many of the clergy were starting to yearn for a Church that harked back to the days before the Vatican Council, where the laity had less participation and things were far more stable and safe. Slowly that model was put in place by the bishops. The new translation of the Mass is a good example of the bishops taking the Church back in time. By producing a "Latinised" version of English, the bishops got back as close as they could to the old Latin Mass. I can understand why they would want to do it, as Latin was the language of the clergy, but surely the needs of the laity should have been taken into

consideration. Anyway, being a Vatican II priest from that time on became increasingly difficult. You were viewed with suspicion by bishops and marginalised in many ways. Thank goodness it didn't affect me in a negative way but only made me more determined to advocate on behalf of the laity and try to put into practice the hopes and dreams of the Vatican Council. And then came Pope Francis. What a breath of fresh air. And a Vatican II man himself. Being a priest in Australia suddenly became a lot easier, and more enjoyable.

Two in the 45–55 age group had been at a Diocesan high school where abuse occurred, although they were not abused. Their families were very involved in the Church, often hosting clergy in their homes. They expressed feeling betrayed, and not comfortable leaving their offspring alone with clergy and a degree of fearfulness and uncertainty because the abusers were often very popular teachers (so they are uncertain about whether they would know now in order to protect their own families). They also expressed anger and grief for what had happened and how it had been dealt with (poorly). 1996, billeting clergy for bishop ordination in [-] Diocese. This family had a bishop staying with them. The issue of abuse came up, with the bishop relaying a specific example that had been reported to him, and that he didn't do anything. The mum of the family asked the bishop, 'Why didn't you do something?'. The bishop responded "I didn't know what to do". She handed him a copy of *When Ministers Sin: Sexual abuse in the Church*, by Neil and Thea Ormerod, and said, 'read this book!' The bishop borrowed the book and later returned it, yet still went on to fail to deal with it. There was a family we knew with 6 kids. The father abused them all and extended family. That poor woman received no pastoral care. She even had to pay commercial rates for counselling. People in the church moved away from her when she attended Mass. Stayed with a family in Switzerland years ago and the priest came once a month and the people ran the church at a local level. This is where we're going.

- 'I'm so embarrassed to admit I'm Catholic. My friends think I'm an idiot and that really hurts'
- 'I like the Mass. I get a lot from it I don't get from Anglican or others'
- Many of the participants have either lost hope that the Church can change its behaviour, or are questioning whether any hope they have is misplaced. They wondered if the clergy/Church hierarchy understands how desperate the situation is for the Church's survival in Australia.
- 'The nuns that taught me were wonderful people and set me up in my faith'
- 'Losing key women role models in the Church—(namely those nuns that used to teach and be principals of the schools, etc.) hasn't helped things now. Those nuns knew how to run the show and be strong female role models for children and others.'
- 'It's not a representative leadership structure and decision-making process—nothing like it'
- 'It's not only the child abuse. It really hurts because lots of families have been damaged and the Church isn't remorseful'
- 'Pastoral care has been lacking. I'm really angry about how the Church and us as the Church have failed to live and act pastorally.'
- 'The main message I want to put out is that it's really not OK, and I'm confident many people in my generation all think it's not OK. It's embarrassing'. See attached for remainder.

One faith experience from the past was that on the way out of Mass one day, a parishioner asked the bishop, "Is it okay to go to Communion three times a day?" The bishop responded, "Why would you want to do that?" The parish priest told the same parishioner that they could only go to Communion once a day. If a person loves Jesus and is at a time in their life where they need the Eucharist, why can't they receive it? Another faith experience was talking to a very good Catholic about the Holy Spirit and he replied, "Do you believe that stuff?" People come to church but they don't understand it—we need to educate them. Another faith experience discussed was how some Christian churches go out and sing to those in palliative care—one particular parishioner recalled attending a nursing home with Father [-] and all of the people were sitting around in the lounge room. No was one talking or engaging and, "The King and I" was on the television. Father [-] said, "What a beautiful movie, let's sing the songs" and started singing along with it. Everyone one in the room lit up and joined in—they loved it and it brought JOY to the group. This was how one simple

act of kindness changed the day for a group of lonely people. Another faith experience was about an unwelcome feeling in the church—there is an inner core within the parish and some people don't belong. The first time this parishioner went to Mass at [-] she sat in someone else's seat and got a dirty look. Another faith experience related to the Charismatic Christians and how they relate to the Spirit. Catholics aren't educated in the Spirit—the third person is forgotten. Eucharist—love/grace—open the box—the Spirit, baptism and confirmation—we need to unwrap the gifts of the Spirit. We need to look at the Charismatics—we need more awareness of how important the Spirit is and go back to Pentecost. Go back to the Spirit, "Without the Spirit this is why you are so weak. Do not be afraid, my hand rests on you. Amen." Be still and know that I am here. Silence after Communion so the priest can say a prayer to the Holy Spirit. We are not taught what adoration is—we're not developing our faith. We need to be more ecumenical—we can learn from other faiths and enrichen our own.

Inclusions and Exclusions ... Our experiences. In 2008, a couple went to see the priest about forthcoming marriage and because the young man told him his mother got his Governmental Certificates together, he asked who was getting married here and asked for his licence??? But because he didn't have it with him the priest would not continue the appointment. The couple left and both decided that they would not be marrying them they got married in the Anglican church. The stigma that the Church puts on being a divorced Catholic. Being told you "cannot receive the Eucharist". A mother being told she was worse "than a murderer" Getting away from an abusive husband and obtaining a divorce. The priest's view was that she should have stayed. A young woman was told she could not receive the Eucharist so went to the Baptist church where she felt welcome. So many good people have been hurt by the Church. A daughter told recently i.e. A week ago, when she asked a priest for reconciliation ... he could not because as a divorced person, she could not receive the Eucharist.

I am a regular churchgoer and very conservative in nature ... I go to church because since childhood. I have been going every day to me. The CHURCH is all I have and will have ...it's a place of solace and I find peace when I go. GOD calls each one of us by name and he has plans for all of us ... so let's use our talents and not bury them ... let us multiply them?

Today, I am one of the millions of Catholics throughout the world who feels let down and pierced to the core with shame and disillusionment with clergy who have sexually abused our children. Today, Cardinal George Pell has been found guilty of this crime and it somehow burdens all of us who call ourselves Catholic. I was born in 50's and raised in a Catholic family. Like a lot of my peers, I blindly followed everything that we were taught. This did continue into my adult life with my husband and our family. The presence of God in my life has been very real and I have always believed in the power of prayer to get me through both the good times and the bad times. However, regardless of us taking our children to Mass each week and giving them a Catholic education, none of them are practicing their faith in the way we have always done. This is such a common problem and I question how much the hierarchy needs to take responsibility for this development. I have always been able to separate my faith from the personality of the priest but too often, people leave the practice of their faith due to the priests' attitude. And as a member of the Church, I find it disheartening when we see a priest behaving in a manner that turns people away. From observing my children, their peers and others in the wider community, I feel that there is a greater need than ever for them and their families to have a Church where they feel welcomed and where they can feel they belong to a community. I see many looking for a way to express their spirituality and have seen a large number looking to mediums. I personally find this to be a close connection to God's plan for us but in no way would it replace faith. However, many younger people are looking to this to find a meaning to their busy and often stressful lifestyle. I am also finding that so many of my generation are leaving the traditional practicing of their faith and are questioning the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic Church. I find this disturbing and have noticed that a lot of times, this change has occurred when they are disillusioned with operations of the Church or a Church organisation such as education.

My father as a staunch Catholic and a good man loved the ritual of the time which included referring to bishops as My Lord and kissing their ring which apparently was thought to contain a splinter of the Cross. Those days are over and it is time for the hierarchy in particular, to stop the play acting.
In this Diocese, the Church needs to rationalise its human and capital resources. As difficult as it may be, it is time to acknowledge the impossible task of utilising every church. In this Diocese, there are four distinct Regions which could be split into district faith communities. [-] would be divided into [-] into [-] into [-] [and] into [-] these main churches would be the Mass centres serviced by groups of priests who live in Community. Other churches in the Diocese could be used for prayer services run by lay people. Or the land could be sold and the profits used to build retirement homes. Priests in community provide support/guidance/safety and companionship. Reducing the number of churches will enhance the quality of liturgy and increase numbers attending. We have to do this before our priests are run ragged and eventually are preaching to empty pews.
I am a convert. I love this Church I chose. I am saddened by all that has and is continuing to happen with children and vulnerable adults. I realise that more assaults are committed by family members, other institutions and faith communities, but as the largest Church we continue to get the spotlight for longer. Yet, nothing seems to be being done to truly show how sorry we are. I am the Church, I find it very hard many times to address comments from friends when I see nothing concrete being done.
My history is that I am a convert (at age 38) from a protestant upbringing. My wife was a Sunday Catholic and we received an invitation to attend an 8-week catechesis on Adult Faith (2 nights/week). This changed my life and the life of my 3 children and our growing number of grandchildren. 26 years later (now 62), I am tremendously grateful for those courageous souls who first received the Gospel themselves, accepted ongoing formation in the faith and then like the original apostles took on the task of evangelization. This brought the Word and a new life to me and many, many others. This is the basics of the Church and I pray that with all the current discernment, we as a Church can embark on this simplicity and stay focused on the will of God, for the salvation of Australia and all humanity.
My sister's son came out as gay four years ago. This was rather devastating for her and she struggled to find ways of reconciling this with her deeply held Catholic faith. In desperation, she went to three different priests for help and received none. She has given up on the Church and is so disheartened she will not even enter a submission to the Plenary Council. Priests have become administrators and are no longer healers. They need help to change their orientation from the business model as well as from the clericalist model.
I was raised a Catholic and have practiced my faith and for a short time in my early years left, but returned and became involved before my second marriage, then our children being raised as Catholics. The Mass is a very special time for many of us in the Church, however at times, it can be long and drawn out, and sometimes I think we can cut down on homilies, and many hymns and have a weekday style Mass, 25 minutes for some. I am a funeral director and my faith plays a big part in my chosen vocation. I come across many Catholics who, for many reasons, walk away, but when there is a death, these people come back to the Church, and that's where it sometimes falls down, while they return, some priests find it hard to get to the level where the family are in their journey, that's why many families use celebrants which is not the answer, I try to work with the family and encourage them that the funeral rites of the Church are something special and that everyone can play a part, if I can help these families on their journey at the time of death somehow come back to the Church, then I am doing my job. I believe our God is one of hope, understanding and forgiving and at times, I think the Church loses that, ...
The recent events have resulted in my faith wavering.
Unfortunately, the way the Church has handled Sexual Abuse I wonder why still practising. Response to Royal Commission was pathetic. Response Catholics for Renewal Melbourne is a document that sums ups the true feelings of the laity. The response of no comment until appeal on Pell's case shows no leadership. Having known it was coming for weeks, why not out there on the front foot?

<p>Only interested in protecting ourselves, and not all those we have disenfranchised over the years... PRIESTS have lost respect from the non-committed community and lead-in-charge not just carries on.</p>
<p>Mine is a very normal story. Most of my faith has been shaped by my parents and their friends. Also, by being in the youth group Antioch. I always felt accepted by my church community, but I do have cousins, aunties/uncles and friends who have felt excluded due to being gay, divorced or not in line with the Churches' teachings. I have been shaped by wanting everyone to belong ...</p>
<p>We are four like-minded mainstream Catholics in our seventies. Some may say why are we bothering at our age?! Well, we care about where our Church is heading, and at present, it looks very sad, especially after travelling all over Australia and attending Mass in a multitude of different areas, seeing the lack of people attending Mass, and if they don't attend Mass, it is very likely they don't belong to a parish community. What will happen when our generation goes to their eternal home, there won't be much of the Church left to carry on the work of love that Jesus commenced all those years ago. I know, some will say that God will provide, BUT God also expects some effort from His people. We have presented some ideas of where the Spirit is leading us and hope and pray that those responsible for looking at the many issues that face our Church today will listen to the HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH LISTENING TO WHAT THE LAY PEOPLE ARE SAYING TO THEM THROUGH THE SAME SPIRIT. There are many issues that could be questioned/commented on; we chose the ones that we feel are important to the growth of the Church of the future. We were all brought up on what people say "The Green Catechism Days". This has given us a basis of our faith which the four of us have followed through over our adult years with various adult education through study groups, RCIA, Prayer groups, Advent and Lent groups, etc. etc. We are not looking for radical changes, just for our leaders to LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT THROUGH THEIR PEOPLE when discerning what issues they will place on the Agenda for the Council meeting.</p>
<p>Statistics show that the current and next generation yearn towards the traditional Tridentine form of the Mass. The yearning towards the Tradition ahead of the liturgical reforms of the 1960's–1980's is evident. I go to both forms. It was the Holy reverence of the Traditional Latin Mass that caused a spiritual re-awakening that drew me back to the Church. We must return to the Tradition of our ancestors in order to evangelise in this modern secular world. The Church is trying to appease secularists and liberal Catholics—this has seen a decline in church attendance. It is not working. We need more availability to the ancient liturgy, teach our parishioners the importance of reverence back to the Mass. Fill our souls with the ancient Gregorian chants.</p>
<p>Bioethics is the most important thing I got from my faith and focus on family.</p>
<p>The most exciting time was Vatican II. I felt that there a real dynamism sweeping through the Church. It appeared that the laity were going to be given a place where their input would be crucial. Sometimes priests would stop or overturn work done by the laity. This was due to clericalism—or entitlement—being accepted by the laity as well as priests. I never cease to wonder at the resilience of the Faithful who continue to contribute despite what has happened and is happening now.</p>
<p>I went to a recent sacramental preparation program for my child at [-]. I found the priest to be condescending towards the parents that attended that evening. I witnessed catechism at its worst. The priest was not welcoming. The atmosphere was not encouraging to be part of the church community. In my Catholic life, I have experienced other priests that are life-giving and welcoming. They meet people where they are, rather than speaking down to the people. It is disappointing the fact that this is still happening now and to experience it this year.</p>
<p>Ministry is ineffective because it's gotten so big. Every parish has multiple nursing homes and sick. The Italian Chaplain does nine funerals a week over a large geographical area. A senior member of the Church told some parishioners that we have the right number of priests for the number of parishioners—this is a corporate answer. We need more priests to revitalise the Church, to minister effectively and draw new people in. People today would see the Church in a different light if priests could marry and women were accepted to perform more prominent roles. Those who have turned away from the Church, or those who are not a part of it might be drawn in if they can see something</p>

in it that is meaningful to them and that they can relate to. There's a passion—Catholic beliefs mean a lot to us. All agree there is an urgency for radical change within the Church, the call for change is loud. Look at the whole priesthood—it's not sustainable. Importing priests is not the solution. We need courage now, courage to instigate positive change.

Sacramental program—Father [-]—talk about bringing up children with spirituality—never seen such a positive response from parents. Getting them where they need to be today. Parents are not interested in the Church or the sacraments, they are interested in their child—that's how to get them in. Father [-] asked Father [-] to be involved and it was the most positive response from parents. Another parishioner was teaching at [-] years ago and [-] was speaking at an assembly. A girl, who was very smart, dux of the school, asked him, "When will the Church allow women to become priests?" [-]'s response to her and the entire school cohort was, "I would rather see the Church dissolved than see women priests." Women make up 60% of the Church in Australia today—it was women who stood by Jesus at the cross. This attitude is divisive, sexist and arrogant and needs to change or there will be no Church. Some parishioners from another parish joined the Uniting church because it is more welcoming. One parishioner was surprised that people in the group whose faith is stronger than their own have the same problems that they have. Consensus of the group is that they don't think that the "old man's club" in Rome will change. We need a whole new Church—as in WE are the Church so we can evolve—not dominated by celibate males far away, "jocks in frocks." The celebration for the new pope, it's raining men in Rome—the Church is not universal, it's not Catholic or Christian but a very exclusive boys' club dominated by power, not religion. A priest at the altar in his sermon mentioned female priests and was promptly sacked—nothing is going to change while men are in charge. Another person said that they were angry and frustrated—sick of "crap" homilies, pious platitudes, there's nothing practical. Some of the stuff you hear from the pulpit is rubbish. Priests scared of giving social justice homilies, dead scared to talk about social justice issues because they're political. Father [-]—land rates. You need to tell the priest nicely if you enjoyed the homily or not, "You did/didn't inspire me." One person said, "We're all regular Mass goers—look how we feel. Imagine how everyone else is?" ABC—Paul Collins left the priesthood—the bishops just don't get it. The Plenary Council is heavily weighted in favour of the clergy and they only make up a very small minority of the Catholic Church. Sixty percent of the Church is women and where is their voice?

One parishioner is disappointed in the Church—has a friend who is a strong Catholic but doesn't go to Mass often because they're disillusioned with the Catholic Church and the direction it's going. Parishioner critical of a person who did the wrong thing and felt in her heart she could not forgive that person. A young woman who came to church got pregnant—she was criticised by the Catholic community and left the faith. We need to be more accepting of people who come to church—if they dress a little inappropriately, sitting in my seat, a little noisy. The Church is very exclusive and needs to be inclusive and less judgemental. Talked about Hillsong—they have their own television channel because it's vibrant and modern. They have holes in the base of their collection plates so when you put coins in, they fall through, so you have to put notes in—gets the church more money and people still go there. One participant did a religious theology course and it opened up their eyes, their understanding went from infantile to adult. Certificate of Diploma, made me think I had to read the scriptures non-stop. Catholics let themselves down—they don't know the Bible. They need to go to Bible discussion groups to get a better understanding, a basis yourself, other religions have it. One person said that they had been in the Legion of Mary for 27 years and they loved taking the blessed Eucharist to people and seeing joy and radiance in their faces. Visited [-], there were no signs she was dying, said the rosary together, came home and two hours after her daughter rang to say she'd passed away. She loved us coming to see her so much. I am proud of my religion and try to always be at Mass—I look forward to it. I pray twice a day—I pray for my family mostly and myself. I sing religious music to my grandchild—happy, happy home. This is how I brought my children up—adapted to God. Another parishioner's family play music at a small church and some Seventh Day Adventists attend because of the music. Another person spoke of a child who was asked, "What do

<p>you believe is the face of God?" The child replied, "Every person I meet." A catechist said they had worked for 26 years and always felt ineffective. People told her that she was wasting her time, they're not going to listen. The sacramental program in the parish was difficult, a few say you're doing a good job, most said you're wasting your time including three priests. I don't consider it to be a waste—just because the children are not coming to Mass doesn't mean it hasn't made a difference. The last 3 years with Fr [-] the sacramental and scripture programs are more supported—he's there at the sacramental program. One person said that their 5 best friends' families don't come to church and they think she's an idiot for going. Go back to 3rd rite of reconciliation, for the priests own safety as well—the church used to be packed when Fr [-] did the 3rd rite at Easter time.</p>
<p>I am a young first-generation woman who was born into the Church and chose to stay. I say that I chose this because I used to only go to church because I had too. When I was around ages 16–18, through involvement in various Marist experiences via high school and involvement in a prayer group, I decided that I wanted to be in this Faith. It was a journey of self-discovery and personal reflection. I became a youth leader for a few years after high school and directed our Stations of the Cross. I also am an acolyte and minister of the Eucharist. I have felt that my involvement has somewhat diminished in the youth leadership aspect because we don't have the support for groups between ages 21–35. We need to focus on this group, the future of the Church, and to nurture authentic experiences in this group. Everyone is busy studying, working, having families and travelling. Especially at this age. We need support and attention to maintain our place in this Church, and to want to be there.</p>
<p>Faith for me is a personal spiritual and emotional journey. Religion is supporting a community of people.</p>
<p>I am a cradle Catholic. I have experienced firsthand the lived example, love, compassion and witness of countless people who are living witnesses to the person of Jesus Christ and who claim their Catholic tradition (largely lay and some religious). I have also witnessed a fractured, judgemental Church with discordant power structures, rampant clericalism (embraced by cleric and non-cleric alike) that does not nourish its people. I remain in the Church, constantly challenged but always hopeful.</p>
<p>Growing up, religion was the centre of life but there was abuse by the clergy of their power. The Church that is the lay people who support each other.</p>
<p>I completed a 2-year Masters of Theological Studies at the JPPI Institute in DC. Every day was extraordinary, learning and appreciating the beauty of our Catholic Faith. Based on the Theology of the Body of Saint John Paul II, I appreciate the vision the Church upholds for marriage, for the meaning and ends of the marriage act. We dare not succumb to the modern-day confusion on gender, that we choose whether we are male or female. Gender is determined at conception. The beauty and complementarity of the masculine and feminine needs to be relearned so that true love can be experienced here between men and women, husbands and wives, a foretaste of the love we will experience in heaven in the presence of the Holy Trinity. This is one of the great gifts we have to bring to the world, even to Catholics! George Weigel has said that the Theology of the Body is a time bomb waiting to go off in the 21st century. I recommend Christopher West and this Theology of the Body Institute to you.</p>
<p>I am very grateful for the family, priests and nuns for the early years of my faith development that has supported me throughout my life.</p>
<p>Other countries use the third rite of reconciliation. Third rite of reconciliation was a lovely experience. The priest was up in the pulpit saying things and you respond, "Yes, I did that." Everyone came to [-] for the third rite when Father [-] was the parish priest. Fr [-] also did the third rite of reconciliation. Bishop [-] put a stop to it. Serious sin, confess privately to a priest. One person talked about going to a confirmation and what the priest spoke about had nothing to do with confirmation or the Holy Spirit—you need to keep it relevant. Another person spoke about going to church in Queensland during an outbreak of the flu—the priest told the parishioners not to shake hands, just</p>

to acknowledge each other. It was beautiful. Another option seen in church was to have small, reusable cups for parishioners who take the blood of Christ during communion—this is more hygienic than drinking out of one chalice and more people may take it up.
The only reason I am still here is my grandmother. What she has come through in her life is remarkable. Her faith and belief in her Church is something I credit with that resilience. I love the way she loves God and her Church, in a quiet, unassuming way that does not force, coerce or judge. She does not guilt anyone as is so common in the faithful Catholic ranks. I feel like if someone like her, married with six amazing children, and who had overcome many things that would have felled even the strongest person, and yet to be humble and take no credit, but if someone like her could have led through this example in a broader sense beyond her own family, then the Church would be an amazing organisation, it would inspire great faith and it would build people up so they could endure anything. My grandmother taught me to turn to prayer, and whenever I do it is in recognition of her. God made her, and so He and his Church must be redeemable.
I'm what they call a practising Catholic who sees the value in the Church and insight in Christ's teachings but am nevertheless dismayed and disheartened at the way the institution of the Church constantly let's both Christ and his people down. I see this as an institutional failing, not a problem with the fundamentals of the Church or Christ's teaching. But for many, people see them become disillusioned with the Church and end up throwing the baby out with the bath water.
I am a convert to the Catholic faith from a strong church-going Bible believing background. Once I learnt the truth about Catholicism via online media through videos and podcasts by other protestant converts (e.g. Scott Hahn, John Henry Newman) and the lives of the saints (e.g. St Francis de Sales), I fell in love with the Catholic Church. This shows how important the online world is to the future of the Church. I often miss the music and dynamic preaching of my old churches from before I converted.
I've often said at work what our Gospel was about in Mass. Father talked about a family who had a boy he could not hear or see but he played beautiful music. No matter how we are, God never leaves us. He is always there for us and we all had a beautiful conversation because I think people may think that the Church is boring but it's the feeling we all have after Mass and the first and second reading and the Gospel. We are all one and God never judges us. Our faith from our religion is so peaceful, loving and kind. Where else would you want to be? It's a loving, respectful feeling when we go to church. We are there as one body, one person and our love is like Jesus had for us.
I have beautiful pictures in my room of Jesus. I talk to him. I pray to him. I hope that our generation will grow and come to church to hear all the readings in Mass and be blessed by God. Thank you. [-] is 10 years old and submitted this response with the permission of his mother, [-].
I am a teenage boy who has a strong faith in Christianity though I get many questions from atheists who endeavour to take away my faith. They always bring up if Jesus really has a lust for humanity and loves us all, why is he inattentive to the dying people who are starving and are emaciated? My answer to them is that Jesus has already done enough for us and God gave us the honourable will of free choice. The atheists like to argue that Jesus isn't there for us when we need him and has a disdain feeling for humanity, but their beliefs are very incorrect. Jesus is always there for us. His presence endures in our hearts. Earth is just a qualification into the gates of heaven. Death is a part of life on earth and everlasting love and vitality is a part of life in heaven. The reason I brought up my experience with the apocryphal atheists is because I was able to get a sense of what God is among them. I love my faith and will always follow God. I believe God had given me the tremendous gift of music and has turned my life around and made me more appreciative of life and its values. This gift of music is something truly marvellous. He has also given me a beautiful family who also have a strong faith in God and in his morals and guidance. All of these great experiences I have had are given to me by God. My God will forever have me and I will forever follow in his footsteps.
I grew up travelling twenty miles to Mass, rain or sun on dirt roads. Mass was the most important activity in our lives. Now, sadly it is the obligation to attend ... there is no feeling of enjoyment after Mass.

I started attending the traditional Latin Mass when it was available and it was the best experience of my life, we need this to be in every diocese and we should promote tradition rather than modernism.
The charity of the Church in Australia (through [-] parish and [-] College, [-]) enabled me to be educated and be the first in my family to attend university and obtain a Degree and Masters. This charity called me to Ministries in our parish and later parishes ([-]) including Pastoral Councils, Finance Committee, St Vincent de Paul Society, etc. This call to Ministries has led me to be a more active Disciple of Jesus. This active Discipleship of JESUS is calling me to be his Apostle in the way I live and seeking to share him with all that I meet. Thank you God for your grace in my life and may you continue to lead me in the WAY and the TRUTH that is JESUS, my SAVIOUR and my SALVATION! AMEN!
Yes, by my involvement in the Legion of Mary, I experience many stories of what true faith can do especially many of whom who pray unceasingly are so peaceful at the hour of their death. These people have had a lasting influence on me.
I have grown up with a Catholic father and a Methodist mother. My mother's father was extremely anti-Catholic—My mother always ensured that I attended Mass and provided support always in my faith—but it could never be discussed in front of my grandfather. Receiving the sacraments as a child was challenging because of this. I have often been close to tears when I hear the ignorance of priests now making it so difficult for children to make the sacraments and making so many hoops for families to jump through. While it is important to ensure that the children are educated and understand the steps they are undertaking—I do wonder if it had been the case when I was 7 making my first reconciliation and holy communion whether I would have had made it through—Children deserve the opportunity to know God—If the parents allow them to make the sacraments, which today through the anger with the Church in the community is getting less and less, we should encourage and nurture these children—ensure they are safe and give them every opportunity to know God.
I was always happy to be able to pop into the church anytime during the day and say some prayers at the altar or near a statue throughout my young life. These days, all churches seem to be locked up and I cannot visit when I have a few minutes and I cannot encourage my kids to go into the church and say a prayer when they are on their way somewhere or on their way home as the churches are all locked up. And the sermons often are about the gospel and are often not interesting to the younger ones—could be more about how to live a good life and relevant to daily living—even if the priest reads out a sermon prepared by a good writer for that week—many priests can choose to share the good speeches—one that relates to daily life and has good messages. We used to have missionaries visit the parish and get a faith encouragement boost. And Mass could be a bit shorter in time—between 30 mins to 45 mins could suffice I think, with emphasis on the important consecration and receiving Holy Communion. And encourage confession—we were taught to go at least a once a year—hardly anyone seems to go now. Could the confessional be open during Mass if possible or straight after Mass? Confession is hard to find for our boys. Confession is a big benefit of Catholic faith and can be used to help a lot. The good youth groups don't seem to be available to our youths. And other Christian churches have a "host or be hosted" volunteer house dinner swap where you can put your name down on a list to be invited to another parish members home or you can invite another parish family to your home. Play outside the church was encouraged after Mass when we were young and the church community can become more happy-get-together feeling than "obligatory". Instil a love of the Eucharist as that is the best thing ever.
My husband, legally blind since childhood, experienced a miracle in Lourdes, not sight but a complete change of attitude to his problem. Nothing stopped him from work, parenthood, community service and life.
My encounter and openness to Our Lady Queen of Peace of Medjugore, through reading and two pilgrimages to Medjugore has cemented my faith in Jesus Christ and Catholicism. However, the huge lack of faith by Church leaders (and therefore the majority of parishioners) in Our Lady's current role

in the Church has left me feeling isolated and adrift. However, I remain a resolute disciple of the Catholic faith precisely because Our Lady is the perfect disciple to follow to Jesus.

I am divorced. My ex-husband and two young teenage children are Catholic. I chose to be baptised Anglican when I was approx. 9 years old. My new partner of over 12 months is also a Catholic (Irish). We live together and plan to marry. I spoke with my local Catholic priest who asked me to fill in paperwork with personal details about myself and my partner. After handing in this form, I was sent an SMS from our local priest advising that "it was too complicated" for me to be part of his church. I have been attending my local Catholic church for over a year or so now every Sunday and other evening Mass. I was very disappointed to say the least with such a response from the Church. Very upsetting indeed.

I was raised as a Catholic and was very devoted, but turned away in my 20s for about 25 years after being lured away by the ways of the world. I was looking for happiness, but was completely miserable and alone. I believe it was through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to whom I had always had love, that Jesus called me back and forgave my sins and showed me that my life only had meaning if I followed Him. I am now doing my best to make reparation for my past sins and trying to lead a holy life.

Please see attached documents.

When I was at senior high school in the early 1980s, our religious education was not examined. We had to attend school for slightly longer to fit in the classes and that was fine. Our principal, a [-] brother, was an amazing man: passionate about education and his faith, firm but fair, compassionate and a great example of how to live as a Christian. He set high standards for the school, and clearly demonstrated those himself and held the staff to the same high standards. Yet we knew if things were tough, we could depend on the school community for support. Our religious education classes were conducted by very carefully chosen teachers, with clearly deep faith, and a range of ways of living their faith. The classes were conducted in both formal settings, such as when we did some comparative religion studies, and informal, such as during our sex ed. There was plenty of time for discussion and for us as teenagers to question and challenge, in a supportive environment. The teachers would listen well, and also share their faith stories as appropriate, and guide us (gently!), all with the result of helping us to grow in our faith and understand what being a Catholic meant in practice. This was Jesus' love, care and compassion in action. I don't see this happening today with high school Catholic studies, and I think we as a Catholic community are letting our kids down.

The Spirit is strong in this country—when taking time to be quiet and reflective anywhere in nature in Australia, it soon becomes apparent to my soul. There are some very special places as well, such as the land where St Mary's Towers is built at Douglas Park, NSW, and Uluru. This country and our first nation's brothers and sisters have a lot to teach us, and we need to be open to listening, without judgement, without defensiveness. We need to listen with open hearts and minds, to grieve together and to celebrate together.

The Church speaks out against contraception as something that is against life, and yet doesn't appreciate that by growing our population without care or balance, we are not considering our impact on the life of our planet, which is also created by our loving God. Asking people to abstain is unrealistic and also fails to understand the role that healthy and respectful sexual union between a husband and wife plays in strengthening and deepening their bond, to the benefit of the children in the family, the extended family and community. It also fails to understand that in some cultures, men still see sex as their right and privilege, and the health and education of their wives and children as well as their environment, are secondary considerations. Yes, women are life-givers, and bearing children was one of the most awe-inspiring and spiritual things I've ever been privileged to experience. And as women, we also care about the future and care about our world—we care on many dimensions.

Many stories of faithful Catholics having been abandoned by their partners, and sometimes having entered into new faithful (civil) marriages, but for various understandable reasons, not wishing to enter into annulment proceedings regarding their first traumatic experience of marriage and marriage breakdown. THEY MUST NOT BE PUT INTO THE "TOO HARD BASKET". The only way to do justice to their pain, as well as to the sacrament of Marriage, is to revisit the annulment process in relation to abandonment by one partner beyond reconcilability of marriage.

So many people are suspicious of the very notion of hierarchy. Add to this the general focus in the West on the problems of the "oppressive patriarchy" (a narrative taught in almost all modern universities—and high schools), and it is no wonder that the Catholic hierarchy is so deeply misunderstood. In saying that, people (especially youth) are so open to hearing the actual reasons for hierarchy, including:

- the fact that Jesus created a hierarchical Church;
- the fact that there is no other way to unity other than a hierarchy (as proven empirically by the Reformation and subsequent scourge of ever-increasing divisions amongst Protestants);
- the very logical and pastoral arguments presented decades ago in *Inter Insigniores* on the question of women's ordination
- the fact that the Church is not an inward looking institution, but should be outward looking—and that the laity are BETTER EQUIPPED than clergy to evangelise those outside the Church. As Pope Francis stated, an inward-looking Church will become sick; I would add that one of the symptoms of this sickness is the "clericalism of laity" under the guise of "empowerment of the laity"—through ignorance rather than malice. BETTER AND MORE PROACTIVE, DIALECTICAL TEACHING IS NEEDED, ON THE GROUND, IN EVERY DIOCESE AND PARISH, BY THE MOST INTELLIGENT AND PASTORAL TEACHERS AVAILABLE.

I seriously have not encountered any of these crimes, but I know they do occur. My experience with our priests has been exemplary. I have loved every priest in my parishes. My faith has grown it. I must say I have had to drive two hours away to hear good priests speak and wonderful speakers from the U.S.A. The Catholic high schools are another thing. My three children and my grandchildren have left the faith and said blame the Catholic schools. I think the Catholic parishes need to teach our young people everything that we learned 60 or 70 years go. You go to Mass and see mainly grey-haired older adults with a sprinkling of young families. When my husband converted, the RCIA programme was very weak and most adults I know who converted in adulthood, have left the Church. Our Holy Catholic Faith is the most wonderful thing in my life and others. It has made me what I am today. I couldn't live without Catholic school teaching which ended in around 1965. What has happened? I think you should all go back and see all the errors you have made with our Catholic teachings and most importantly THE HOLY MASS. Fix it for we are all going to die and have to face our maker. FIX OUR HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

This submission has been formulated with both painful and hope-filled consideration by a group of women (with two passionate male endorsements) who have given much to the service of the Church. Most have raised families and continue to lead busy and fulfilling lives whilst juggling professional careers or voluntary roles that encompass a broad variety of Christian ministries. All of the signatories are currently committed to the Christian story and the life of Jesus, and express this by participation at many levels; some are still involved in parish, some no longer participate in parish life at all. Some sign as professed Religious women/men, others as professed lay members of religious orders who regularly commit to their respective communities, whilst others are now exploring their own spiritual journey guided by the Spirit. Almost all feel at a crossroad in their commitment to Church and see the outcomes of this Plenary Council as critical in regard to their future involvement. Many of these women have been meeting regularly for the past seven years, studying theology particularly from a feminist viewpoint. Without exception each woman has participated in lectures, study and/or significant formation opportunities by leading theologians or recognised Church leaders. What is common to all is that we have a vision; we have a dream for the

Church that we love and hope for, not the Church as it is now. We have watched with frustration for nearly the term of our adult life the absolute rejection of our skills and talents, the disinterest in the hierarchical Church to involve us as women in leadership roles or even to allow us to participate in each of our chosen ministries in a manner we saw as creative and spirit-filled.
The Church is ignoring the plight of fathers who are being removed from their children's lives by the Evil Family Court ... this is the most dangerous and abusive institution in our society and yet the Church is silent.
I recently attended a wedding at a non-Catholic, evangelical, Christian church. While the service lacked the rich history and culture of a Catholic service, it was clear that ALL the participants were people of a deep, if simple, faith. They clearly knew all of the members of their community well and many were actively and deeply involved in ministry. Most were under 40. The bride and the bride's mother were former Catholics. The bridesmaid was part of a deeply committed Catholic family. Why are they going to another church? They experience a real and deep sense of community. Many of the decorations at the reception 'belong' to the church through donations over many years. Church members did all the decorations/flowers, etc. The three women I mentioned above are intelligent and scientifically trained however, they chose to believe a simple creation myth because it is the orthodox view of their church community.
I do not go to Mass regularly, but when the church organises a youth Mass event, I tend to take my kids as it is more enjoyable.
I was a guest at Hillsong and oh my goodness, this is how I want to be greeted when I go to Mass and the music was amazing!!!!
Like the young person in the article, I too have experienced many liturgies and celebrations of the Eucharist that are—to put it bluntly—boring and irrelevant. I have also attended many that have taken my spirit all the way to heaven as it were. This is part of the difficulty we face—such inconsistency. One parish I attended relatively frequently had music that was consistently from the 1970's and 80's and music that I was singing when I was a child. It was funny to hear a 25-year-old person saying how old they felt 'Here I Am Lord' was for them—I reminded them that well, if they find it old, imagine how old I feel it is! There are many parishes however who are embracing new and more meaningful styles of music and this is to be applauded. One parish has also brought in much contemporary musical styles that remain highly appropriate to the Eucharistic celebration which is wonderful.
I believe that we, as lay Catholics, have to stand up and let it be known to Australians that we want CHANGE in our Church. To make the Church more “inviting”—more about the good works and Jesus and God, and less about the “bad media stuff”—may get people flocking BACK to the Church, rather than away from it.
I used to attend Mass each Sunday, not really assist other than attend. Now I'm more involved. An opportunity opened for me to develop. But if there was no encouragement or support I wouldn't do it. We need to keep working together from all levels.
A few years ago I worked in a remote mining town in [-], where one priest covered two parishes, about 200kms apart. It meant that he spent two weeks in a month in each community. The town had a religious sister who attended to all the parish needs by herself. She held communion services, which were often much more meaningful than a Mass said by the priest. She prepared children and their families for sacraments. She was the catechist, ran a small parish council, visited the sick and vulnerable, ran a second-hand outlet and much more, and all by herself! I met her biological sisters and other nuns at her 50th and 60th anniversary as a nun. What remarkable women, highly educated, intelligent, dedicated Christians! Why do they not have more recognition in the Catholic Church? The power of priests needs to be shared among genders.
As I have written this, the conviction of Cardinal Pell has been made public. Obviously there have been major failures in Church governance over many years; these failures demand commensurate changes in organizational structure, transparency, accountability and equity in lay/clerical participation in the institutional Church. Since retiring to [-] six years ago, I have participated in the

church community in the weekly Eucharist, as a Pastoral Council member, in the Catechetical and sacramental programs and in the Social Justice group. I have found this a profoundly enriching experience and give thanks to God for our local church community. I am sure this experience is replicated throughout the diocese and the land. I pray that together we can find the confidence and the courage to reform the institutional Church in such a way that it truly reflects gospel ethics and values.

I have repeatedly asked for perpetual adoration chapel in our parish—the priest has ignored me. With fewer Masses being said and churches being closed early—where do working people go to have an hour with Christ? I have been accosted in the church whilst praying—so do not feel it safe to pray in church outside of Mass times.

My Catholic faith has been firmly established in my family from my home country but when I joined a Catholic community that builds up family, the youth, the single adults, the widowers and the like. I feel truly more engaged because community (aside from the regular church) helps many persons of different culture and backgrounds share together their faith and moves them to help others. The community of Couples for Christ (Oceania Mission) helped my family when we arrived in this country with no friends or relatives. They invited my family as their own and made us feel belonged. I would join other communities of different faith/religion but this community maintained its Catholic roots and yet embraces those who are lost, non-Catholics and somehow transformed their lives with experiences of God's love among all of us.

So many people in my parish have shared their pain and frustration at how the Church has treated them over recent decades. It appears that many people, including those who have been loyal to their faith and Church for decades, are just hanging on by the skin of their teeth. Younger Catholics including those teaching in our Catholic schools are sharing their despair at the current state of ecclesiastical affairs ... and not just the fallout from the Royal Commission but the ineptness of bishops and a governance structure that belongs in a fossil museum. There are very few youths in our parish ... and those who do come feel totally unsupported by the absence of a peer group and the antics of an aging population that want no change, even if it involves implementing best liturgical practice.

An attempt was made to block my ordination as a mature candidate because of clericalism, including the views of certain people that someone over the age of 40 is categorically unsuitable for ordination—despite having been a religious brother for 37 years (and whose current contribution to the Church spans nearly 50 years). It appears that my story/journey to priesthood was for some people too threatening; some opponents even dared to question even my very relationship with Jesus. These people also went behind my back to complain to a bishop who then set up an investigation that my support person (a priest) blew the whistle about because of its abusive process, including a conflict of interest related to the investigating team. For me, this was clericalism at its worst. It has also given me some empathy for how some lay people (including victims of sexual abuse) have been treated by clergy. Thankfully my priestly ordination proceeded and I am currently very much at peace in my priestly identity... but wary still of certain confreres whose human, spiritual and pastoral (if not intellectual) maturity is suspect. Subsequently one of the investigating panels ([-]) has been removed for now from active ministry due to adult boundary violations. Because of this Good Friday and Holy Saturday experiences, my faith grew stronger as did my own growth as a person. I have come to trust this transformative experience as an encounter with the paschal mystery of Christ.

My stories are embedded in the questions above; it is too hard at times to be pastorally sensitive to many Catholics because of the Pharisaic and scribe-like behaviours of many bishops and other Church leaders. Jesus of Nazareth would rail against these folk as well.

I am amazed at how unhealthy many clergy are; morale is rock bottom for many; addictive

behaviours are rampant and loneliness, prolific; for the most part, diocesan clergy have had little and/or recent human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral on-going formation and their demeanour reflects this.
As a priest, I am finding it increasingly challenging to respond pastorally to people who have been deeply wounded by our Church over decades; divorced and civilly remarried ... same sex attracted (which is nature, not nurture and a gift of God); etc.
I have had three periods of long-term unemployment. Despite being very proactive in seeking new employment after three or four months one had a sense of having exhausted all the possible routes, so it was a time to turn to God with the serious request: "As I have tried my best please help!". New positions arose and each time they stretched my skills levels and ability to be of service within the community. Within employment, when the pressures were very great then a request for help always led to a breaking through of the pressure point(s).
For me, my faith was, and has been influenced by an encounter with Jesus Christ that I had through a youth group steeped in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the mid 1980's. That person/God that I encountered has led me in my life since then, in all the decision that I made. This kind of relationship is what we should be directing people to encounter.
My faith has always been very strong in spite of everything that has been happening, as God has always been there for my family and has granted us many blessings and even some miracles.
During a particularly tough personal time—I had broken up with my girlfriend and fell in a rut mentally—I found comfort and grace in regularly partaking in the sacrament of reconciliation. I prayed, and I listened to the advice of clergy. Several months later, I had a particular moment when all negativity and animosity that I previously had kept within me vanished, and I realised the important things in life. I realised that the girl I had broken up with, was indeed my best friend and the one I want to be with and to spend the rest of my life with. I couldn't have made it here without my faith, and the encounters I had with the Church and our incredible priests. I have always felt encouraged, and never condemned. I have felt the courage to right the wrongs in my life, and to be the best version of myself that I can be. I am truly grateful for this deep encounter that I have had with God, which has now deepened my faith and set me on the right path. I am now preparing for marriage with this beautiful girl, who I now call my fiancé. I feel blessed for all the opportunity I have in my life, and also, for the challenges and hardships, because they allow me to walk with Christ. My wish is for other people, particularly young people, to experience this freedom and unburdening of sin, and the realisation of a strong purpose in life, through Christ.
Experiencing dynamic youth ministry over 30 years ago which enabled me to hear the Gospel and be formed in discipleship had a significant impact on my life. Recent signs of hope and new life where people's lives have been transformed has been the Alpha program being run through the parish.
Having lived through the conviction this week of Cardinal Pell, my faith story is really about standing at the door of my parish church ushering my children to walk out and away. What would Jesus have done? "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." Matthew 21:1–13.
The group accepts me, all attended Catholic Schools and over the years, lost faith in the Catholic Church and have become critics rather than participants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking ourselves, "how much do we love God?" • How can I build a relationship with God? • Sharing in human prayer. • Celebrating the Eucharist. • Building my relationship with Jesus in our everyday lives. • The responsibilities and workload on priests may be alleviated by allowing them to be married.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain tradition/values—move with times. • Who is Jesus Christ in today's community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church needs to speak out in defence of Christian values e.g. Through the media, over the pulpit, online. • The Church can't remain silent on difficult and major issues LGBTQ and the dignity of the human person which is under attack. • The Gospels and Scriptures are the basis and foundation of our value system. • Love and respect and accept the choices of those who choose 'alternate lifestyles' regarding sexuality. • The Church in Australia needs to understand itself as a functioning minority in a secular society.
<p>The Catholic Church needs to be more inclusive. Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying, "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ. If all Christians acted like Christ, the whole world would be Christian." We as Catholics seem to be so caught up in following the rules that we have lost touch with the very essence of who Jesus is and his teachings. We are like modern day Pharisees, we read the words in the Bible but we completely miss the point and don't put it into practice. For a number of years, I have spent a few hours on Christmas Eve with a very devout Catholic family. Each year, four generations of the extended family get together. A couple of years ago the matriarch was giving advice to a number of people at the party about how to be a good Catholic—fasting during Lent, attending Mass on Holy days of obligation, regularly going to reconciliation, etc.—following the rules. However, she does not accept her grandson's wife, a divorcee, or their young babies. She openly criticised the girl and when her grandson stood up for his wife, she ostracised him and anyone else in the family who disagreed with her. This has divided the family and they no longer get together on Christmas Eve. The matriarch follows the rules of the Church, but she is blind to the teachings of Jesus. Upon reflection, how many of us are like her? Catholic means universal, and I hope one day the people who are the Church, the clergy and laity together, can attain this noble objective. My hope is that the Plenary Council is the first step on this journey...</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disbelief at the cover up of the extent of abuse. 2. Church leaders to be honest in dealing with issues. 3. Lay people to be more involved with decision-making. 4. Less clericalism.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We three in our group pray for the priests in the Marian Movement—and have witnessed and hearing stories of conversations of priests who attend our Marian Retreats. 2. Eucharist is the source and the summit of our faith—that is what we believe!! 3. We were taught Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist—so let us stress re-education of the absolute necessity of the sacraments—centred around the Mass and Eucharist adoration where we can fully praise, thank and listen to Jesus. 4. Where there is 24/7 adoration in parishes—there is tremendous upsurge in living the Gospel message and a great increase in the numbers of religious vocation—especially to the priesthood. 5. Our Lady was the first tabernacle of the Eucharist—who better to turn to—to lead us to Jesus and what He wants of our Church in Australia. 6. Eucharist Adoration requires sacrifice but where parishes are having it the fruits are abundant.
<p>As a couple we have always believed that we were brought together through the divine plan of God. We were both on an Easter retreat as young adults when we met. I was discerning the priesthood, and literally on the evening of Holy Saturday felt that this was not the path that God was calling me towards. Then I met my wife—an hour later! We then both joined a pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Canada in 2002, where in the presence of St Pope John Paul II discerned a life of marriage together! We have felt God's direction through our life and pray we continue to listen to this call.</p>
<p>Role of women in the Church. Balance in Church. More transparency from women. Women should not be excluded from decision-making. Church loses women to other churches where they are now ordained. Why not use 100% of the congregation, not only 50%?</p>

1. Disbelief at the cover up of the extent of abuse.
2. Church leaders to be honest in dealing with issues.
3. Lay people to be more involved with decision-making.
4. Less clericalism.

Religious Freedom:

- Is very much in question at present.
- Must be free to evangelise to take Jesus' love and teachings into the world whether it be in Catholic Schools and in the work place.
- Must be able to practise our teachings in hospitals—must change the laws in Victoria which force all health workers, doctors and nurses to promote abortions, assist women to get an abortion or take part in doing an abortion. We must work to rescind these awful laws.
- Before new legislation goes ahead with the Australian Religious Liberty Document chaired by P Ruddock, we especially the churches, need to be able to look at, thoroughly examine and discuss the document and make recommendations.

I am disappointed that my four children in their early 20s who have been brought up as Catholics with 13 years of Catholic schooling, yet see no value in their Catholic faith—they see no significance in baptising their children or marrying in the Catholic Church. How is the Church addressing its loss of Catholic youth parishioners?

Increase the pool of priests. No danger to Church property. Works in Eastern Rites and Greek Orthodox Church. No theological impediment. Give priest practical experience in my married life—help his ministry. The story is of a son, married to a Greek Orthodox wife and our association with her married priest.

- This whole exercise is futile unless younger Catholics are energised/engaged/challenged to contribute to the future of the Catholic Church.
- Band-aiding is no longer effective—we need a completely NEW structure.
- Bring younger Catholics to the end of the process—the decision-making for the future.
- I AM THE VINE—YOU ARE THE BRANCHES ...
- There is a need for renewal of the Vine. Opportunity to grow the vine anew THAT IS THE ONLY WAY the leaves won't blow away.
- When was the last time the Church Leadership (Cardinals and bishops) sat and listened to the concerns of individual parish communities on a regular basis. It is not meant to be an opportunity to preach. They must listen.
- Annulment process not working for all in this position.
- Denied communion if they should remarry without annulment.
- Lack of support during divorce period/marriage difficulties/abusive partners.
- Build support networks/agencies to help those especially at local level.
- Annulment process is like a Court process where all people have to be interviewed.
- Encourage people at community level to accept and discuss and see Christ in all people.
- Rules to allow divorced people to receive Eucharist.
- Scripture interpretation—is God all about love or rule making.
- Open up God's love through Eucharist to all who come to the table. Divorced, gay, other Christians. Myth and Dogma.
- Education: Has dogma kept up with changes over 2000 years?
- Need to learn about our religion. What does it really mean? Need for education.
- Empowerment—confidence that God is with us.
- How do we encourage learning in the laity? Infantile finds an average our education ends in primary school.
- Sunday Sermons—not using the talents. Member of laity to be invited to talk.
- What is taught in the Sermons?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church's teachings are not relevant to modern world. Myth is still taught as dogma. The message must be relevant and education is required because much of our understanding is of primary school level.
<p>I have a very deep faith in Jesus who for centuries the Catholic Church has in many ways misinterpreted the message He came to give us. Firstly, until we get rid of CELIBACY, we will never ever grow in the Holy Spirit. Celibacy is at the root or all that has gone wrong with the Catholic Church for centuries. Celibacy is NOT FOLLOWING JESUS > WE MUST ACT NOW AND MAKE CELIBACY OPTIONAL. CELEIBACY IS NOT FROM JESUS.</p>
<p>I have seen a vision of Mary, 'our Lady'... my faith is strong. I think the Charismatic experience or phase was very life-giving as well. Music is important ... so is visual appeal. Prayer... types of prayer needs to be experienced.</p>
<p>STORIES and PERSONAL CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were born into families with a long history of Catholic tradition and practice, baptised as infants into the Catholic Church, educated in its schools and by its clergy, and married in the Church. We baptised our children, enrolled them to receive the sacraments and sent them to Catholic schools. They in turn have married in the Church, baptised their children, and are now sending them to Catholic schools or to Catholic scripture. Yet they no longer wish to attend Mass regularly if at all, and while they remain part of the tribe, they are not interested in the Church or even making a submission to this council. • For more than two years we have been involved as part of a small group within our parish who consider and openly discuss our honest feelings towards today's Church. We began meeting before the Royal Commission and have continued to do so on a regular basis. While we are all committed to Catholicism and practise at various levels, we are affirmed and supported by one another in keeping the faith. Sharing food and company in communion, we see ourselves as a microcosm of Church at the grass roots level. • Working in Catholic secondary education for more than two decades, as a teacher and in Pastoral Care, and employment with Catholic Care in group work have offered the opportunity to understand the social commitment of the Church to the community and the valuable work it supports. We are concerned that the crisis in the Catholic Church will cause current and prospective clients to discount this work and choose to go elsewhere when considering education or welfare assistance. This will adversely affect those people who need assistance and the individuals who work with integrity and commitment in these fields. • A person we know who works in the Catholic education sector feels restricted in his right to express honest opinions on social media about issues such as same sex marriage where the Church has a different view. On social media platforms, he is not identified as a teacher in a Catholic school. The limitations placed on teachers in Catholic schools (who are Catholic and support the ethos) to express personal opinions is unfair and unjust, as well as potentially placing their employment in jeopardy.
<p>For many years, as I sought to reconcile my training as a scientist with the beliefs of the Church based so often on Roman myths and Greek philosophy, I found myself questioning whether I remained a believer. For a long period of time, I found myself unable to join with the community in communion because the beliefs as expressed in 1600-year-old teachings were not rational when examined by the knowledge we have accumulated in that time. As I do not believe that God intends to confuse or mislead us, I have concluded at this time that I must continue to search for deeper meaning behind the teachings. I have decided that I am part of the worshiping community and that the problem really lies with the failure of the Church to make its teaching relevant in the modern world.</p>
<p>During the 1960s, I was a student of St [-], [-]. Over a weekend, one of our teachers, Fr [-], vanished. There was no explanation. Someone took over his classes. He was never spoken of again by the staff during my time at the school. In 2018, the well-respected administrator of our [-] Pastoral Region vanished without explanation. He was replaced as [-] and removed from the list of</p>

staff in the weekly Bulletin. There were denials all round of any knowledge of where he had gone and why. Not one parishioner I've spoken to suspects he has done anything wrong, but that he may be suffering from overwork and stress. Some months later, after parishioner speculation, rumours and backlash, he has been relisted as the "[-] (on leave)", with his replacement now described as being in an acting role. A very carefully crafted statement appeared in the Bulletin that added no real information. We parishioners would be quite satisfied with a brief statement of the facts. Over the years, we've heard of clergy being moved away from the site of allegations of wrongdoing, only to have them re-offend in their new pastoral position. Parishioners can deal with the facts but not with mysteries that will blow up out of all proportion. The bottom line is again: No surprises!

The [-] Pastoral Region in [-] comprises three parishes and four Mass centres. As a member of the Pastoral Council, I have conducted three Discernment projects surrounding parish initiatives. The first involved the grouping of the three parishes under a figurative banner as a Pastoral Region, rationalising the clerical and administrative staff to be based at the [-] and to share the pool of priests to provide pastoral services throughout the Region. The second project designed a new set of Sunday Mass times for the Pastoral Region. We had three 9 am Masses meaning we needed at least three priests. There was a fourth 9 am in a neighbouring parish. The objective was to provide more choice of Mass times for parishioners while allowing all the Masses to be conducted by just two priests, without overloading them. This was to cater for clergy absences for illness, pastoral commitments or holidays. We conducted several well attended discernment meetings involving parishioners to get requirements and suggestions. While the changes were eventually implemented, it took several years before the bishop approved the plan. People became frustrated with the endless meetings, which proved more of a burden than getting used to the changes once implemented. The third project intended to rationalise administrative work in the Pastoral Region office by removing the Chinese walls between the finances and other administration tasks to run three separate parishes. The canonical process would involve suppressing all three parishes and creating a new parish. The names and histories of the four churches were to remain. The parishioners would only see the name "[-] parishes [-]" which they'd used for 7 years change to "[-] parish [-]". They appreciated the need but would not be impacted by the reduction in wasteful repetitive work in the central office. We held a plenary public discernment meeting, separate discernment meetings in each parish and a final plenary discernment meeting, all attended by the bishop and some local clergy. About 98% of the votes supported the initiative. People said: Just do it. I presented the "business case" to the Council of priests, with the parishioner feedback, and left them to discuss the plan. Apparently, they were unanimous in their opposition, voted against it and scuttled the whole thing, leaving the bishop, local staff and parishioners dismayed and disappointed. Obviously, their reasoning was never published. But, opposition to perceived empire building was the conclusion surmised by parishioners. The whole decision process wasn't rounded out via a statement to parishioners. It's been lost in the appointment of a new bishop. People will not engage in future discernment processes as they drag on for months and don't carry much weight, especially if the final veto rests with a group of priests from across the diocese who don't participate in the process until the very end.

I am single, female. Brought up in a Catholic family. 5 brothers—2 of them priests (deceased). I have every sympathy for the overworked priest in ministry. My faith means everything to me. Even though I do and have found it difficult, I am a practising Catholic. I have been very involved always in the Church despite, as a woman, being excluded from a more active role in the Church, I have belonged to St Vincent de Paul; facilitated prayer groups for Lent and Advent ... I belong to WATAC, I am a Christian Meditator—as per Fr [-] OSB and [-] OSB (i.e. WCCM) and facilitate two groups in two parishes (ecumenical). I am presently a reader and take Communion to the Sick.

As a child and into young adulthood, I belonged to a parish whose parish priest and many of the supporting priests, were Irish. I learned how my spirituality was entwined with the triune God, the doctrine and my interactions with those around me. There was almost an Irish "branding" to the

Catholicism that I practiced. There was always a focus on “where you found God”. If I needed to question the doctor, it was welcomed with robust and learned discussion. I was never “shut down”. In fact the opposite is true, I was encouraged to question and explore my faith in the safety and security of those who knew of it better than I did. As an adult, I’ve moved and as such joined a new parish. I’ve been involved with this parish for just over 10 years, and it still doesn’t feel like “home”. There have been a number of different priests, all who want things done a little differently, and a message that doesn’t connect with the deep spiritual connection that should be synonymous with our faith.

All our experiences can be summarised as follows: For the past decade, we were blessed and made receptive to the Holy Spirit who guided us on this magnificent journey. Whatever we needed to know to strengthen our faith, landed (literally) on our laps. We are a revealed faith, and with the help of Jesus’ Spirit of discernment, material of spiritual reading arrived, were read and acted upon. As an example: the Holy Mass booklet, testimony of Catalina Rivas, to whom Our Lady appeared to during the celebration of a Mass. In this booklet, we are given such a light into the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, so we don’t attend Mass as an obligation or a routine but to live this sacred moment fully. Because the teaching of Our Lady helped us, we then ordered 200 copies and distributed them to people we knew attended Mass with very little knowledge about it. Gloria Polo testimony arrived to one of us at the same time as the booklet of the Holy Mass, and this was probably the most turning point of it all. The visit of Brother Elia from Italy to Sydney in 2009. Br Elia has the stigmata of Jesus Christ, just like Padre Pio. He came and toured at various churches in Sydney. It was also good to be part of his tour and through his experiences and sufferings recorded in three volumes, I came to ponder this: Jesus-Christ suffered a great deal for me but, after acknowledging it, I pushed it aside. This time, He is sending me a little Brother from Italy who also suffers Jesus’ wounds, just to remind me of His great Passion, for me sinner and for the world. The above few, of many, many more testimonies, many more stories and miracles contributed to our wonderful experience in our Catholic faith, in our love of God. But, all these awesome experiences would not have lasted if we did not receive the proper guidance by our priests who, at every celebration of the Eucharist, fed the flock entrusted to them with God’ spiritual food, through homilies. We are thankful for all the priests placed on our path. God bless them all, God bless the Plenary Council 2020 and God bless Australia.

For every cleric convicted of child sexual abuse there are other clerics who have abused children and not been convicted. For every child groomed and abused, there are hundreds of children who were unsuccessfully groomed and managed to escape physical abuse. Nonetheless these children were spiritually abused. I was so abused in the confessional at the age of 13–14.

Jesus said to the woman at the well “.... whoever drinks of the water that I will give will never be thirsty again; for it will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Pope Benedict the 16th said that “people don’t listen to teachers—they listen to witnesses.” So, I’d like to share with you a time in my life when I was, in a sense, a witness of this “spring of water”. I went to a Catholic primary school, received all the sacraments, then moved onto a public high school. At the age of 15, I was convinced God made the world, set it in motion then forgot about us. God was distant, unapproachable and silent. I had plans for my life and God wasn’t a part of them. Then one day I was shown that God penetrates into the concrete world. I was invited to a youth prayer group. The priest running it saw I was new and prayed with me. He put his hand on my head and as he prayed, I felt a physical warmth flowing down my head, my neck, my shoulders and all the way down my back. I was shocked. God exists. There are moments when it feels like life balances on a razor blade. All that is familiar, certain and safe falls away and we are left to make a decision of faith. I wanted my way. I knew God wanted me to surrender to His way. I turned to the Bible to find reassurance. I opened it on Matthew 5 “You are the salt of the earth, if salt loses its flavour, it is good for nothing”. The ultimatum was set. Did I want a life of meaning or something less? Not knowing what would happen in the future, and risking everything, I chose to surrender. I made a sacramental Confession and felt, in that instant of absolution, the powerful friendship of Jesus. Never before had I felt such a freedom. Jesus was now walking with me and believe it or not, talking to me. Not in words in my

ears but in a conversation of thoughts. I went back to the youth group, and experienced the "love of God being poured into my heart" as described in Romans 5. As they prayed with me this time, I felt a warm, deep love welling up from the centre of my heart, exploding and radiating outwards to saturate my whole body. It felt exactly like "a spring of Living Water". I was filled with love. I felt whole and complete. I beamed with joy and gratitude. All I wanted to do was praise God. After this my life changed. I loved to pray, the Bible came alive and many of the passages seemed to apply to me personally. Holy Communion became a blessed union of Life and light with the Trinity, and confession has changed to become a source of healing and a strength. I am not alone in my experience of the Holy Spirit. In the last 50 years, thousands of Catholics all over the world have had similar experiences in what is known as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. It is a current of Grace which is renewing the Church in the wider world. There are many more experiences with Jesus that have happened to me, particularly after receiving the Eucharist when I pray in tongues for 20 min. I can evaluate more.

Ministry in the Anglican, Baptist and Evangelical churches is effective with part time ministers. One person attended a funeral in an Anglican church in a southern suburb. The minister was part time but knew most of the family and friends of the deceased and gave a beautiful, moving ceremony. Everyone was touched by his compassion, sensitivity and wit. It was one of the most moving funerals some people had been to.

Over the decades, fewer and fewer men feel the calling to the priesthood. In the last couple of years, the number of Masses had to be reduced to ensure that there would be a priest available to say Mass. We are also relying on retired priests to prop-up the number of priests available to celebrate Mass. To ensure longevity of God's Church, the number of people joining the priesthood has to be increased. What God is asking of us in Australia at this time is to look at new ways to increase the number of priests. It has been proven over the years that the way we as a Church go about recruiting people into vocation is not working and is not giving us the numbers we need. In my view, ordaining married men and women into the priesthood would also help to address the prevailing issue of sexual abuse of minors that the Catholic Church is struggling with for decades.

Very often, new priests have no idea how to connect with the parishioners. Their homilies are either not to the point or are very theoretical. Quite often, parishioners are left with the questions: What was that all about? And how does this help me in becoming a better person? [The] priest comes and priest goes in a parish. This is a well-established principle. The consequence however is that parishes get different governance dependent on the ability of priest. More consistency would be provided if the administration of the parish is totally left to the parishioners. The priest will regain valuable time to invest in the spiritual and mental well-being of the parishioners. I will not regurgitate the long list of examples that show that the current confessional practices do not work. It is assumed that the reader is well aware of the issue. The Catholic Church in Australia has been given a once in a generation, and perhaps even once in a century, opportunity to show leadership in constructively addressing the issues that the Church faces. It would be an enormous shame if this opportunity is not used to its full. It would be a shame if conservatism and the fear of change would rule out any constructive and respectful reform. Let's be bold, tackle the issues that have not been discussed for generations and provide the Pope with proposals that allow the Catholic Church to re-establish itself as a force for good and salvation in the twenty first century global community. The Plenary Council 2020 is not just for Australia, let's lead the way globally.

Group Response: Many personal stories were shared about experience of faith and diversity in a parish assembly.

I have a good experience here and very supportive Catholic Church I feel so sorry and empathetic to all the servants of God in Catholics specially priest as I believe they have been targeted. We have to realise that priests are human being as well and also, they can be weak and they can't accommodate as much as they want to, as they are few against millions of people who are seeking their guidance. They are highly regarded in the society. I believe they have to be treated with respect and dignity

and transparency equal rights amongst us. I have no bad experience in any church that I have been to Australia and I hope that they will promote more of our teaching and beliefs so people will not stereotype our Church as there's something behind closed doors.

My faith got off to a great start because of wonderful caring parents who were devoted to their Faith ... there was never any fear of God, just much love. I had an influential Sister of Mercy Nun who helped my Faith along as I would be rewarded if we could only beat the public at Rugby League—I've great memories going back to the mighty 5 stone 7 lbs [-] team of 1961 and 1962. It was about this time and from the same Sr. that we as a family started reciting the Rosary. It was always said no matter what and where we were travelling ... we prayed for rain, we prayed for good prices for our wool—the Rosary has much to be blamed for. Supporting my classmate [-] has also made me more aware of the Faith and the need to defend it from adverse teachings.

Sadly, what is shaping me as I get older is the absence of a woman's balance in the Church. It is disheartening. It is not reflecting the mystery of the Blessed Trinity—a mystery of infinite eternal relationships. Yes, women are doing great things in the Church—but not at the liturgical, worshiping heart of the Church. Sure, we can be female servers—or shall we call it "altar kitchen duties?" I have given up going to the Cathedral for big celebrations where I have to look at a sanctuary full of men and I keep asking myself—where are the women. I am not anti-men. Lots of priests are doing a good humble job, but they would reach out with Christ's message of love better if women shared in giving that message.

As a woman in the Church, I have often felt on the margins excluded from full participation in many areas of Church life, leadership and governance. One of the lingering memories of my childhood is standing longingly at the door of the sacristy while my brother donned the garb of an altar server while I was banished to the pews. Even the parish priest's old English sheepdog was allowed on the sanctuary but I was not. It was the first of many times I noticed and felt that women were treated differently in our Church. They made cups of tea and polished the brass but were not up the front leading the community. Many people like me have been shaped by these experiences to think we are not worthy. Of course, we know better.

I was raised Catholic and always loved Church as a young child. My Grandmother would take me to church and I loved that time with her and the mystery and beauty that church was, the candles the incense the prayers—I felt at home. When we moved away from my Grandmother, my Mum would take me to church, she would never receive communion as she had been remarried but she still took my brother and I to Mass. I'm so grateful to her for that commitment. As a young adult, my commitment to Mass began to wane and I got busy and didn't put God at the centre of my life. My faith was still always there and I called out to God many times. When I got married it was important to me to marry in the Catholic Church, and my future husband agreed (he is also Catholic). Once married, we would go together of a Sunday to Mass but again life got busy and we allowed other things to get in the way of our commitment to God. We had friends who were going to a local Baptist church so we started going there and became quite involved in the life of their church. They had a great community spirit, so different from what I had experienced at Catholic churches. It was a lovely experience in regards to fellowship. What didn't sit easy for me was their lack of respect for the Catholic Church and the misinformation they propagated about the teachings of the Church—it would leave me feeling uncomfortable and uneasy but I was without a sound knowledge of why the Catholic Church believed and taught what it did. I was woefully under-educated in my faith, despite going to Catholic schools for 10 years. My time at the Baptist church came to end after listening to a sermon one Sunday morning where the minister repeatedly took pot-shots at the Pope and what he taught. I was not able to tell anyone there why the Minister was wrong but I knew in my gut he was and I was determined to learn how to defend my faith. Since that time, I have done lots of reading and listening to CD's about our beautiful Church and why we believe what we do. I love every minute that I get to spend on this education. I just feel that there needs to be much more opportunity to access this kind of information and education. I would love to have the opportunity

to study Theology and Church history and I hope that once the children are older, I will have chance to be committed to further study.
I have been a Catholic since birth, and in my 20's I made a commitment to continue in this faith. I found good mentors, friends and teachers at University who deepened and broadened by understanding of Catholic Faith and all it encompasses, doctrinal, sacramental, spiritual and relational. As a Gen Y Catholic, I am dismayed at the destruction the Church brought upon itself from within over the past 50 or so years. We cannot complete that destruction by maintaining outdated "modern" notions that have only left people like myself with a shell of a Church to be a part of.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-marriage counselling asking my now husband and I, to think about how I was going to have children if I worked so much. 2. Our wedding ceremony being tainted by horrible anti-gay comments. Disgusting.
Saint Mary MacKillop gives credence to my above answer.
Like so many others, I initially received my faith from my parents and from a Catholic school system that supported that faith and taught basic catechetics. Catholicism was respected and not belittled in society. I am saddened that it has not been the same for my children and grandchildren, some of whom espouse decidedly uncatholic views. Unlike the discussions we had in my family when I was young, our current debates are marked by grandchildren giving examples of why they feel the Church is 'irrelevant' today and how easy it is to only think about themselves and what is easy for them rather than what Christ taught and parental and grand-parental opinions are not supported by other 'authority' figures such as schools and media.
<p>Tell a story of my experience in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coming back to the faith: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Someone was courageous enough to ask me to play basketball and it was a great opportunity to reconnect with community. ○ Someone came all the way to Uni to spend time with me and in. ○ Someone empowered me to be a better person. ● Priests lacking integrity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Someone served closely with a priest convicted of sexual abuse. ○ Betrayed trust from this led to this person leaving Church. ● Friend reaching out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Someone was really encouraging of me to come back to community. ○ Someone invited me and I was really excited and I came. ● Children having good company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is good to have kids in good company. ○ Since Catholic communities are generally filled with good people I felt more confident knowing that my kids are safe. ● Feeling of belonging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joining community has help me feel that I belong and feel safe to share my faith and thoughts.
I am not Australian born and was involved as parish priest for several years in a big suburban parish in Australia. They were very joy filled years. I was very affirmed in role as a ministerial priest by the parishioners. Despite the usual difficulties that arise in any community, I received tremendous support from them in my governance of the parish and our missionary outreach. In the latter aspect, they were very often the initiators and looked to me to see whether what they were proposing was "the mind of the Church" and to officiate in my ministerial capacity when necessary. This showed me the fundamental "good health" of the Australian Catholic Church and its potential to be the Body of Christ and to bring His light to others.
I was blessed to be confirmed with my then 12-year-old daughter. I became a Catholic in my 40s. I had a wonderful priest spend an hour each week for ten weeks teaching me about my faith. I love the quiet serenity of sitting in church and praying to God about how grateful I am for what he has given to me and for what he does.

I am blessed with a wonderful ex-wife and three wonderful children who have grown into fine people through the time of my journey. I am heavily involved in my local parish, and while I have not gone out of my way to come out as a gay man there, it is apparent that it's no secret and those that know take me for who I am and sexual orientation is, generally, not relevant nor is it a consideration. I sometimes do not feel so welcomed by the hierarchy of the Church and have even by one of our former priests who when discussing the feelings of others "did not want to know". Fair enough that he "did not want to know" but it sent a fairly clear message of disapproval of part of who I am. My great reason for writing this message to the Plenary Council occurred last year during the Same Sex Marriage debate when the message that I received from the pulpit on several Sundays during the debate was (not in these exact words but) "you are not welcome in my Church". It was quite distressing and upsetting to hear this sentiment from my local priests who I had served with and still serve with. The vilification was also quite strong instilling fears with the "horrible" things that are likely to occur when same sex marriage might be legalised (many of these "horrible" things were already law and happening with great success). There are other priests and bishops who are far more accepting, and I have met some of these as well.

During an extremely traumatic period in my life, after a period of many hours before the Blessed sacrament in our Adoration Chapel and daily Masses, asking Our Lord for His help, this one day, I was walking home after Mass, ascending a hill, sick with pain and hurt, when at reaching the top of the hill, I felt this sudden 'lift' from my heart. There was a sudden unexplained peace and lightness and calm. I entered my house, and was able to initiate and offer, without any difficulty, a reconciliatory hand to the one who had deeply 'injured me'. To this day, I have not forgotten or been amazed at this feeling of peace I experienced. I realized that the Holy Spirit had taken over (I had prayed to be able to surrender myself to God's Will) and gave me a glimpse of His Peace. With this Peace, it seemed all things were possible. Praise be to God for His Love. He is truly the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.

I have been shaped by the experience of a Church that got involved in politics in the 1950s and the damage caused by this. For me, Vatican II and the Adult Lay Apostolate helped heal this damage and then reaction set in—the laity were taking this 'people of God' nonsense to seriously and the wagons started closing in and the frontier church out there with the people who were not in the pews was gradually reined in, quite ferociously sometimes. The institution became insular and more and more it was a case of Father knows best. And of course, the institution put most of its effort into preserving itself. The institution persists in weasel words when speaking about the findings of the Royal Commission and latches on to red herrings like priestly celibacy and seal of confession, etc. I am a woman and the ordination of woman is another red herring in the present institution—join the clerical caste/class, NO thank you. But there is no reason why woman's ordination should be off the table in any discussion about the ordained priesthood. You know what, banning something is the best way to get people wondering what the problem is. When the Institution makes its loudest noises about school funding and matters of sex, it is no wonder that its statements about the environment, housing and refugees, etc. are not heard in the so-called public square. To be quite frank, the institutional Church is not my home these days' its culture offends me.

I'm a devout Catholic, a pro-life advocate, a mother of 8 beautiful children, a wife, a sister and daughter. Since I can remember my faith journey from my childhood to adulthood was more of a Sunday Mass happy hour and attended others church festivities and following traditions only but was not deeply rooted in my faith back then. My personal encounter or personal relationship with my Lord blossom, renewed and reignite when my husband and myself joined Couples for Christ CLP (Christian Life Program) last 2004. It's not a walk in a park journey, it's full of personal transformation, dealing with my own personal weaknesses and the same time healing in the process, relationships has restored in our family, healing of past hurts, health and memories. From 2004 to present, I'm now bold being a Catholic, journeying with my growing family and my community, witnessing the blessings of our Lord in my life to my family, relatives, friends and sometimes strangers or people with other faiths. My husband and myself are now serving as one of

chapter leaders in Couples for Christ in [-], my children are also actively members of Kids for Christ, Youth for Christ, and Singles for Christ. Our family also serving as member of our choir or music min. in our parish. We are now joyful I serving our local parish and our community in spite of hardships we encounter in life because we know deeply that our Lord God is always there loving us and guiding us through together with our local parish community.
My faith was shaped by my parents—seven kids and we were all lined up spick and span for 9 am Mass every Sunday and on an empty stomach!
One partner in a marriage committed adultery on a number of occasions and the marriage broke down due to the lack of trust and commitment. The innocent person has since met another person and would like to marry in the Catholic Church, but has been led to believe this is not grounds for an annulment. I don't understand this, it seems completely unjust.
I was brought up to believe that God is loving and merciful and that he created to love and be loved. I married with the thought of forever, my husband believed he could expect that meant I would take a life of emotional and psychological abuse and I would never leave. After 24 years of mental torment and anguish I left. The guilt that this carries being a member of the Catholic faith is overbearing. I have since remarried and I live to be the best person I can and it will be between God and myself. However, that is not what the rules say to do. This issue must be addressed because to have a marriage annulled would mean that 2 children were born out of marriage. I would not have that. Please fix this so the suffering does not continue.
I was born and raised in a typical Catholic family. We attended Mass weekly and our faith was a large part of our lives. I lost my way somewhat as a teenager as my formation through the Church has been weak even if constant. At around the age of 16, I was exposed to the charismatic renewal movement which totally changed my understanding of God and the Church. Through this movement I began to develop a deeper understanding of what it meant to be a Catholic and in communion with Christ. This development has continued to lead me deeper into the rich tradition of our Church. Attending Latin Mass on occasion as well as a love for the classic rituals. The encounter which truly shaped my faith was meeting the Youth Mission Team in 2010... that one youth group night has led to everything I am today. They showed me the true nature of Christ.
The recent media spotlight on the Catholic Church in Australia has highlighted much hypocrisy in the Church. Thank God for the media!
I had an enriching experience of Faith and the life of the Church through a national youth group (Antioch) and these both reflected my faith and fostered it. My own children have grown in their faith through involvement with a youth group (a mission of The Disciples of Jesus covenant community).
My Catholic schooling, opportunities to step into a church at any time of day to 'visit' and pray (many churches are sadly now locked), opportunities to attend daily morning Masses which no longer are there.
I have worked as a religious and a Pastoral worker in the southern states of Australia in 5 dioceses. It is my experience that one of the big problems in the Church is the clergy and religious. As a clinical psychologist, I have worked with many people who have been abused by clergy and religious. Their lives have been forever affected by these abuses. Most clergy don't realise the impact of this abuse on the individual, on families and the community. In my experience, these abused people have nothing more to do with the Catholic Church. Their family and friends are also impacted in a negative way. It seems we have lost a generation of young people to our Church. I sat in the church for 40 plus years and never heard of the sexual abuse of clergy. My children have been hearing it since they were in primary school and this has impacted on them and their peers.
I am a whole, integrated person, my life experience comprised of a diverse range of experiences. I have served in the RAAF, I have been a novice with the Nashville Dominican Sisters. I have been a senior leader in the corporate arm of Catholic Education in one of the Dioceses in [-]. I am currently preparing to embark upon my PhD in theology. I have Master's Degrees in two unrelated disciplines. I am a guitarist, a Crossfitter, a calligrapher, a philosopher, a kayaker. I am a granddaughter, a niece,

a daughter, an eldest sister to my 10 siblings (3 deceased), an aunt to my 18 nieces and nephews (2 deceased). I seek to be a friend to all. I am infinitely loved by God. If I can be one whole, integrated person with all of that diversity floating around in my experience, then I believe true unity in Christ really MUST be possible in our Church. Please do consider my attached file and the implications it has for the future direction of the Australian Church if what I am speaking about is done so at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It COULD be the prophetic character of my baptism at play here... or it could just be my own self-indulgent utopian spit-balling :) I'll leave that to the Plenary Council to decide.

1. I used to work FIFO, regularly spending about 60% of my time in the Diocese of [-]. Access to Mass on holy days of obligation was VERY challenging—I found only ONE parish that advertised on their website that they had an evening Mass for those people who were at work during the day so that they could get to Mass. Confession was very hard to get in [-], too. And for some reason, they seemed to think it was safer for it to be out in the open. I felt very uncomfortable and would have been safer in a confessional—closed cubical, not the face-to-face which I understand in this milieu is a risk. My Grandmother (God rest her soul, she died 10th Jan this year) had a number of health scares in the diocese of [-]. Getting a priest to her for last rites was SUCH a drama that we drove up with a [-]-based Conventual Franciscan in the car (Diocese of [-]) because Grandma's own Diocese couldn't provide her with the sacraments she needed when we thought she was dying. Quite frankly that is disgraceful and we are so grateful to the Franciscan community for their fidelity to God as His priests, and for their generosity to our family. This occurred in 2012. I honestly haven't had the courage or the heart to ask my Mother if Grandma received the sacraments in the end. All I can do is pray for her repose at this stage. Whichever researchers and pastoral associates are analysing this submission—please do pray a quick prayer for my Grandma's soul before you move on to the next record in your Plenary work. Thank you!

The Christian Faith I received before I was born from my Family in the RC Church is the most precious gift I will ever receive! It continued to blossom in kindergarten where the joyful Sisters led us little 4-yr-young children to greet Baby Jesus by blowing Him a kiss every morning! The affection for Jesus and His Mother Mary and Father Joseph and the Guardian Angels that my family and the Sister fostered in me is always with me. In Australia, I am also eternally grateful to the loving Christlike ongoing formation I received from the good Religious Sisters, priests and bishops, and Cardinal Clancy, bishop Fulton Sheen. Reading the lives of the Saints in heaven as well as knowing the saintly people still on earth nurtured my Faith and Hope in, and Love for the Holy Spirit. Yours Gratefully, with Loving Blessings for enduring Courage to do all things well like Jesus, Mary and Joseph did then and do now by the power of the Holy Spirit. My gratitude also to all the PC participants working to bring our Church to a truly Christian Reformation. [-].
Tel. [-].

- In 2015, the parish welcomed a new parish priest. The parish at this time had many ministries operating in the parish due to the activity of the Diocese and the openness of the prior parish priest.
- The new parish priest decided to do a survey on 3 things he was wishing to gain advice from the parish community. As there were no survey forms left in the church the day before the survey was due to be in, I wrote my response via email to the presbytery ... which meant that my response was not anonymous like all the other responses.
- Within 24 hours, the new parish priest replied to my email.
- 2 days later, the parish office tried to contact me but as I was engaged in a meeting, the parish secretary sent an email requesting me to come to the presbytery to discuss what I had written.
- I replied the following morning saying that I did not feel that it was ok to meet with him (purely because I was not prepared to have the same vitriol that was written in the email sent earlier vented to me face to face which made me feel unsafe)
- Just over an hour later, he replied to me saying that he was suspending me from any leadership role and involvement with the parish pastoral care team, together with the Lunch club as well as the

stewardship group ... and that my dismissal from parish groups would be in the parish Bulletin on the weekend of 18th October 2015 (Attachment 1)

- My dismissal from the parish was in the Bulletin and read at every Mass over that weekend (Attachment 2)

- After asking Fr. [-] what I had done to him, why I had been dismissed and why he put a notice in the parish bulletin, Bishop [-] arranged for [-] to speak with both of us personally at which he offered professional mediation.

- Bishop [-] asked Fr. [-] to publicly apologise to me and even gave him a draft of how it could be written ... and it was never done either personally or for the sake of the parishioners who were in shock.

- After many months of reminding the Diocese of the promise of mediation, it was finally arranged 14 months later.

- Before the mediation commenced in a neutral place, the support person for Fr. [-] asked that a confidentiality agreement be signed before any discussion started ... which I unwisely did.

(Attachment 3)

- The only reason I wanted to have mediation with Fr. [-] was for him to explain to me what I had done to him, why I had been dismissed and why he put a notice in the parish bulletin ... After asking this many times during the mediation ... he still would neither explain why nor to this day has any public apology be given.

- I have only returned since for 2 funerals of much loved parishioners ... and I grieve from this experience to this day.

Our oldest son was married outside the Church as the priest he and his unbaptised fiancé went to see, did not make them welcome. Our son did not have his driver's licence with him on the day and the priest refused to continue the appointment until the licence was produced. They had even done the "Smart Loving Engaged" marriage preparation prior to this appointment. Both decided that they would not be married by him. The Anglican church welcomed them with open arms and I felt so ashamed ... and here was a young man 10 months back from having served 2 deployments to Iraq. After their marriage, 3 little girls were born, and all 3 girls were baptised at the same time in a different parish, 3 months prior to the oldest enrolling into kindergarten. My daughter in law is not a Catholic and our son is a lapsed Catholic, so I also enquired how the baptismal preparation went and if the 2 oldest girls were to stand beside and then bend over the baptismal font. I was told that they only had to do what was in the letter the priest sent to them. So there was no sacramental preparation ... just arrive on the day ... and the priest's preparation for all 3 families presenting their children for baptism was a little talk before the start. In addition, there were 3 Godparents for our granddaughters ... the sisters of my daughter in law ... 1 who was a recent convert to the Church and the other 2 were not baptised ... I don't understand why the great commissioning of Jesus was ignored ... Matt 28 : 16–20 .. and unbaptised people are able to be Godparents. When I was with a parish we started having an annual Grandparent's Day Mass as close as possible to the feast of St. Anne and St. Joachim. The Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council prepared a Liturgy under the direction of Bishop Michael Kennedy (see "Grandparents Mass—Notes" submitted here). Instead of the normal attendance of 60 at the Sunday 9am Mass, there was 300 in 2013. A big fuss was made by grandchildren and a magnificent morning tea was held with the children serving their families. The following year, 250 people came and the final year in 2015 the Grandparents Day Mass was not one big celebration but every Mass in the parish had the same liturgy. The inspiration and support for Grandparents day was through Catherine Wiley, the founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association in Ireland, which has now spread to other countries.

<http://www.Catholicgrandparentsassociation.org/about-us/a-brief-history/> Catherine made a Video about her story as a Catholic Grandparent and many of us wanted to continue having this special Mass and look at the possibility of commencing a Grandparents Association in the [-] Diocese ... but to no avail as after the first 3 celebrations, the Mass was scrapped and never held since. Ref: "A Call

<p>out to Grandparents” U Tube by Catherine Wiley in 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orWxpKSyyBg</p>
<p>Some have been frightened and shocked that people/priests they let their children go on campus with/eat in their homes as family, have been sexual offenders.</p>
<p>When I was 33, I suffered a brain haemorrhage. Whilst I was recovering my faith helped me to believe that I would be fine. I totally recovered and I know that my faith helped. Whilst semi-conscious I saw something, unknown to me in sight, but then a feeling of total wellbeing overwhelmed me. I then woke with sheer happiness and I knew that I was going to survive. I value this opportunity to have my say and I sincerely hope that our suggestions are listened to. We can only want what is best for our Church and society. If we speak up, it shows that we care.</p>
<p>Youth group is essential in speaking to the hearts of young people as they enter the adult world. I am a cradle Catholic, but it wasn't until I had a reflection day in year 8 (lead by YMT) when I was 14 that I was introduced to the idea of youth group. I had so much fun that day, so I decided to attend the youth group. It was through this experience and that sense of community as a young person, that lead me to fall deeply in love with my faith, with Jesus and the Church. I still have that sense of community and I feel extremely blessed. Had it not been for these crucial moments, at the time in my life when I was growing up and everything was changing around me, I could have turned out to be a completely different person/Catholic. It is the next generation that is calling for change, nothing too radical, but change never the less. This is one of the reasons why I am suggesting that priests undergo continual training in the area of composing homilies, as they need to be engaging for the congregation, as a whole. The council may even consider the inclusion of lay people, in having input into the homily and even address the congregation during Mass. These are simple ways to encourage engagement and overall satisfaction.</p>
<p>I have been involved with the Church (as an active member) for the last 15 years. I currently do music ministry with a focus on making the music sound modern yet prayerful. Some of my peers only go to Latin Mass with chanting—and that's cool. I have met some (and this is a limited handful, but a noisy handful) people whom think what I do is heretical. I get frustrated at the mini political factions within the Church. On the flip-side, I do realise that a membership of 1.3 billion worldwide, will result in differences in opinion—that's life. The things I love about the Church ... I enjoy the small communities, whereby people not only know your name, they know your character. I enjoy playing music and feeling connected. I enjoy reading the gospel in a non-literal way and applying it to my life in 2019. I am fascinated with the liturgical traditions in Church. I am proud that the Catholic Church is open. People can say 'what they want' on particular topics and not get 'cut out'.</p>
<p>I was born overseas in a multicultural society and the Catholic Church was important in my life and I know what I am talking about when I mention a community of locals for locals. I migrated to Australia 40 years ago. My 5 children attended Catholic schools at primary and secondary level. My youngest son was a member of the [-] cathedral choir from primary school to the end of his secondary schooling. All my children have ceased to go to church and distance themselves from Catholicism. I do know that they have a deep sense of social justice. In my mind, this is their inheritance from their formative Catholic years. Does the Church ask itself why other Christian denominations do not experience the attrition rate affecting the Catholic Church?</p>
<p>I thought I had been a devoted Catholic all my life but recently found Tradition and discovered what a general confession is and found the font of Jesus that had somehow been lost within me. I had for a long time been confused by the teachings and the 'anaemic' attitude of the sermons and homilies. The priests are no longer closely pastoral as they once were and no longer are seen as leaders in the community. I have been an extraordinary minister for many years and have now RETURNED TO TRADITION after hearing one too many a Marxist homily from a new priest. It was so Left-wing biased that it made me ill for I had personal experience with Bangladesh and Rohingya Muslims (he was addressing the refugee issue and alluding to open borders). It is the Left Ideology and corruption that is keeping the third world in poverty NOT capitalism and individual responsibility. I started my own charity in Bangladesh and was very successful for over 8 years but it was not Christian based</p>

and I wrapped it up as the mission had achieved its goals and I wanted to pursue a Christian-based cause as I was tired of covering up my faith for POLITICALLY CORRECT reasons. I had many cases of Muslims refusing aid for their children once they knew I was a Christian. I knew if I was to continue I had to have the foundation firmly in Christ. Then I found that the Christian community I was part of was not particularly interested in conservative Christianity and most had fallen in line with an isolation attitude that is becoming more pronounced; keep your faith private and separate to your daily life. This is not good enough in the growing anti-Christ world. We need stronger Christian /Catholic foundation in our lives which is no longer seen as a virtue and I realised that if I exposed my Christianity my Charity would suffer so I closed the charity in order to develop my faith and pray for God's guidance and he has led me to Tradition and finally I find the sanctuary of a Latin Mass gives me the presence of Jesus Christ that overwhelms me and I am so grateful that I know I am now being led to give the service of my life in a richer and devoted way to Jesus.

In my personal pastoral experience in parishes, there is an increasing proportion of young parents who present their children for sacraments but will not bring them along to Sunday Mass because their own marriage irregularity precludes them from full participation. The increasing prevalence of failed first marriages is reaching epic proportions in Australian society. A pastoral response to this issue does not mean a denial of our theology of matrimony as a life-long union. It requires just an acceptance that that the sacramental life of the Church is for the sinful and the wounded and the imperfect. Unless change of pastoral practice happens in Australia, the vast majority of baptized young parents and their children will be lost to the Church.

Seeing the enthusiasm of crowds of young people heading for Panama as some time ago, they headed for Sydney reminds me of my own first encounter with a papal visit when Pope Paul VI (now St) was in Sydney. I recall running along the roadside after his vehicle, so caught up in the excitement of the event and then attending Mass with thousands. In those days, there was no World Youth Day but it was soon to come. It is of ultimate importance to nurture the faith before, during and after the hype of World Youth Day. Thank you to all those who are keeping our young Catholics focussed and nourished. I hope more people of my generation come to realize that there is a groundswell of Spirit fuelled faith and that it is for all practising Catholics to pray and pass on the baton.

I sit trying to bring my children to church 5 and 6. They take nothing in—nothing—and I mean nothing. Not at all engaged in the process. My Mr-4 sits, wriggles around with hands on his ears—everyone looks on—I sit there thinking should I return again or just stay at home. I want them to attend but it's painful and causes ++ anxiety. I recall church at Sunday school growing up—a prayer, fun, craft, little hand action rhyme and games with other kids which relate to the week's message. As a teenager, this changed—there were more age-appropriate activities. I look now as my two sit in Mass with a total of 4 children in the church. This is an aging population which will mean extinction of this very soon if change [and] fresh ideas [are] not taken on board—learn from other faiths in our local community next door children are leaving with smiles and laughter and energy. Make it a place that show true values where we help each other still respect and lay down good values. Learn off schools e.g. mini Vinnies—but change is needed and fast change before it's too late.

Social Justice and its implementation have been the culmination of my spiritual journey; it has embraced the two pillars of my faith; contemplation and action, as taught by the Church mystics for centuries. I have been involved in the practice and involvement of parishioners in social justice for more than 25 years, being part of parish groups, diocesan councils and now chair of an Order JPIC Commission. My study has involved the pursuit of combining these two pillars and my faith practice and love of God is enriched by the deep love of creation and embracing those who are worse off than myself, both in prayer and action. I feel this is the call of all Christians and will keep on advocating this whether this is within the Church structure or outside the Church as it stands.

I have been a practicing Catholic since birth. I love my faith. I love God. I love my church community. However, the Church's rigid attitudes towards the structure of the clergy, homosexuality, and birth control have grated harshly against the messages of love, faith, and kindness preached by Jesus. I find it difficult to continue to express my faith in a Church which continues to defend sexual abusers.

I find it difficult to be a young woman in a Church which does not deem the faith and leadership gifts given by God to women as equal to those belonging to men. I find it difficult to be preached to about love and relationships by a celibate male. I am finding it isolating to continue to attend a church with an ageing population and no real programs for attracting younger members. I am finding that the Church in its current state is so out of touch with the reality of what it is to be a young person in the 21st Century that I have to turn to other Christian churches to help me make sense of my faith. In one of the leading documents from the Second Vatican Council, the *Gaudium Et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Pope Paul VI characterises the duty of the Church to read “the sign of the times.” In order to be present in the world, the Church has a responsibility to listen to the people it serves. I do not feel like the Church has been listening. If changes are not made soon, I believe I will have no other choice than to find a new denomination.

If we are to absorb the contradictions in ourselves firstly, then we can also grant pardon and forgiveness to the Church. After the sex abuse scandal in the Church, I continued supporting my local parish, however I also started to attend an open sanctuary in [-] that was opened up for all denominations to come and share the sacredness of silence, poetry and sacred space. This is a place where all Christians and other traditions come and gather in silence, listen to poetry and bear witness to one another’s journey in improving our ecology. As we are all bombarded with images, concepts and less and less space for silence this little gathering of people has shown me that our hearts are all connected and that the world is in desperate need of healing, love and an invitation into silence.

Holding our first grandchild one hour after birth. A Simeon ‘nunc dimittis’ experience—see the relevant verses. New life. What the Church is all about.

Last year (January 2018), I attended the Immaculata Mission School, held in [-], [-]. It was such a refreshing start to the year and I experienced an extreme newfound love for God and for being a person of faith. It was so reassuring to be surrounded with young people, Seminarians, priests and Sisters for ten days who were so open to both listen and talk about God. Especially after going to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF), I experienced a ‘spiritual high’. Throughout the year, I seriously struggled with maintaining that active love of faith, not only because I did not have that community I had in [-], but my school environment, although being a Catholic school, did not (and still, does not) do much in comparison. I went back to school that year, excited as I felt like there was going to be changes in the school after going with the Religious Education Coordinator to ACYF, but after bringing up different things we could do—introduce student youth ministry leaders, having in-school praise and worship concerts, changing up the hymns in Mass, doing Eucharistic minister courses, nothing changed. Later that year, I felt compelled to bring to the staff’s attention that there was a Diocesan event for schools coming up called the [-] Live Festival. I was so excited because after reminding them over and over again, we finally brought a group of 20 to the event (although hardly any compared to the other schools, it was an improvement from ACYF, where we had 5 students come). I thoroughly enjoyed the day, yet this was slightly dampened due to my religion teachers’ attitudes towards the whole event. There was one session with a talk on Pornography which was a bit confronting to some, and my teachers were not that impressed. I was fine with it at first until they kept mentioning to the other students thought the WHOLE day. Of course, as teachers, they have a major influence over the students, and they all just started to agree with their comments of “wasn’t that just so bad? Or “Don’t you think they shouldn’t have done that?” Or “I don’t know why they did that, they shouldn’t have done that”. As a result of their reactions, the teachers asked the bus to come early and when I asked why, they said: “Well, if tonight’s session is going to be anything like earlier, we’re leaving”. As a result, the bus came earlier and we missed out on a life-changing session, where there were opportunities for prayer teams and Reconciliation and praise and worship, which really could have changed all 20 girls’ lives, as well as my two teachers. I cried and cried to myself on the bus that day, just in the sorrow of the wasted opportunity, in the disappointment of my teachers and in anger at myself for hoping that that event would finally

change things and make a difference. I cried to my mum, "You weren't there. You weren't there. You didn't know what it was like." That night truly hurt my heart.
Attending reflection days with the late Passionist priest, Fr Peter McGrath, the founder of the Passionist Family Group Movement. Fr Peter could give inspiration through his reflections on a range of everyday things, especially suffering.
I was at a construction job site when I met the owner of a civil construction company. He took the time to talk to me and introduced his whole crew one person at a time. Towards the end, he unapologetically yet respectfully shared that he is practising Catholic. For me, it was a bold declaration of his faith. What was amazing was that he was already reflecting and living his faith in the way he dealt with me and his staff even before he made the verbal declaration of his Catholic faith. Authentic witnessing is truly powerful and life-changing.
I still tremble at the fear instilled in us by (predominately Irish) Catholic Nuns, Brothers and priests from childhood: fear of God's wrath; fear of the "devil", fear of the fires of hell, fear of dying in mortal sin (and not really being able to get my head around the whole mortal/venial sin thing). And the physical cruelty associated with that teaching, especially if you were from the "wrong side of the track". Oh! and "The Missions" where Redemptorist priests came to the parish and preached hell, fire and brimstone. And never hearing anything about the "love" and/or "mercy of God"; denial of our sexuality; maltreated in a Monastery where I thought I needed to go for the "salvation of my soul". And then there were the "communists, the yellow peril"—don't get me started....
Only that the decline in religious vocations concerns me and must be reversed. The legal system of inheritance differs from when the rules were made. We must challenge celibacy and discrimination against women.
My faith is what saved me when my husband died. All I could do was over and over ask God why, why. I finally accepted and put my trust in God and my faith saved me in my time of need. My husband always took me to church, not a Catholic, but was very proud of me and I knew he would be sad if I did not continue going to church. I am so lonely, but God is my companion.
My passionate searching as a member of the Catholic faith began more than fifty years ago when I was received into the Church before my marriage. My faith life in those early years revolved around the local parish where my children attended parish school, and in activities in all facets of parish life including, nearly ten years as parish secretary, liturgy preparation and Antioch leader. A continuous involvement in the parish Social Justice Team for more than 20 years only ceased last year, due to lack of support and blocking of any initiatives by clergy. My faith life and intense searching has been nourished by making a profession into a religious order as a Third Order member. This involvement has been at a local level as a community leader for more than 10 years and two terms on the Order's Lay National Council. I am currently serving on the Order's Social Justice Commission as well as a member of the local Diocesan Social Justice Council. Becoming a member of a Religious Order has allowed me to slowly relinquish my love of parish community and to develop my ongoing faith journey through support of my religious community. Parish life has become stifling in recent years, where the uplifting liturgies in collaboration with priest and laity were prepared 20 years ago have long since passed. There is nothing to encourage spiritual growth, parishioners are treated like children, homilies have very little relevance to either ordinary daily life or to younger members of families, and baptised Catholics, adult or young, are not encouraged to use their creativity or participate in leadership roles with any autonomy. I currently support my children and grandchildren with the occasional parish attendance, but led by the Holy Spirit and with an intense interest in scriptures, my spiritual journey has become one of searching for the Incarnate Word in creation and in working for justice away from parish. My vision includes a blend of religion through the eyes of one who is absorbing the expansive and mysterious nature of the Divine presence within and in all of the Universe. Sadly, study of encyclicals and exhortations such as LAUDATO SI and GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE has not been encouraged. I am challenged every day to live in and with the Divine Presence, and cannot go back to the controlled, outdated story which does not joyfully allow our Church to be fully present in our contemporary world.

I grew up, attend Mass every day and say the Rosary every day too. But then I start going to Healing Masses (Charismatic) and prayer groups and from there, I felt the Holy Spirit lift me up, I start understand more the Mass, and the Rosary and I cannot stay without them now, I learn to understand more the people, the ones they hurt me I loved them more, for that is my cross. I learn to put God first and let him be the master of my life, I'm praying to God now, to give me the Grace not to sin and whatever comes in my life, let it be his will. Praise be to God with the Church and give wisdom to all. God Bless.
The hurt and public humiliation of abuse and wrongdoing—be it emotional or physical abuse by the Church, Catholic organisations or schools is intensely compounded and aggravated by individuals and organisations who fervently try to protect their own reputations and positions and integrity rather than humbly acknowledging and admitting their behaviour was wrong, and if they are truly sorry say it sincerely.
I look at the big picture—my relationship with Jesus. Nothing can dampen that, meaning no flaws in any of our parish priests will take away my faith and love of the Mass. I think I have learnt to be humble, accepting and forgiving and always aware of the big picture when being directed by the hierarchy in ways that are not inclusive to all (such as the latest translation of the Mass), or to the congregation or to us as individuals.
[-] parish has had two parish priest or administrators in the past 20 years that have tried to destroy every aspect of community life. A priest who Banished a married woman from active service because her husband deserted her, and who was dying of cancer told a Christmas Vigil Mass that they should not be there if there were not regular Mass goers. Regularly stormed out from Mass to tell everyone to go home quietly and not talk that we should be more reverent after Mass banished the choir stopped all parish committees, etc. and an administrator who reported a parish nun to Rome because he thought she was 'irregular' when it was absolutely none of his business, shouted at any woman who dared to disagree with him, even on secular issues—coming right into their space (5cm from their nose) and telling them he was holier than they were and therefore right, etc.
Two nuns' stories were similar in that they told us of their time in outback Australia where a priest was only seen once every 2–3 weeks so they needed to baptise/anoint/preached Sunday homily and give other sacraments due to demand. Yet when they came to regional and metropolitan areas, they are not allowed this ministry.
No! Not in this Forum!
My husband and I are in our mid-50s and we attended Catholic schools. Out of all of our friends, we are the only ones who still attend Mass each week, including those friends who are Catholic teachers! However, we continue to let our friends and families know that we are involved in our Church—no matter how much they ridicule or make fun of us—as we want to be witnesses to our Faith, to show others that we have continued our Faith on from our school days, and that we have a happy strong marriage because of it—unlike most of our friends who are unhappy or divorced.
I am a convert to the Catholic faith. I converted in 2012. I was raised with no religious instruction and became a Protestant (Anglican, as I was baptised Anglican as a child as part of tradition rather than faith of my parents) after searching many faiths in particular Islam in my early to mid-20s. After searching more as a Protestant, it became very clear to me the errors of Protestant theology. I met some Maronite Catholics who shared their faith with me and was put on to a godly and wonderful priest, Father [-] from [a parish] at [-] in [-]. This ultimately led to my conversion at 28 years old into the Latin rite of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the fullness of truth and Christ's true Church. I met some wonderful priests, Religious and Laity that have helped my growth in Christ. When I was seeking information and later conversion the Catholic Church in Australia was extremely welcoming and full of the Holy Spirit.
I have been most shaped by experiences of priests and laity who follow Christ no matter the cost. By priests whose reverence for the Eucharist is palpable. By sermons that are rich in Biblical study and practical advice. By beautiful singing and liturgy that directs me to God, not to the priest or people around me.

I have a friend who still openly weeps when relating how she was denied communion at the altar because her husband had abandoned her with two babies!! Who do these priests think they are???
I have cried with too many people who have been hurt by priests—some have stayed some have lost their faith.
I joined a seminary at age 15 in the early 1960s, with little knowledge of human sexuality but with a belief in traditional Catholicism. This was the period of Vatican II and I experienced the change in belief structures and the vicious backlash from conservative forces. In this time of some turmoil, I was astounded to learn that the order turned a blind eye to some of the sexual practices of its members. Shortly before I left the order some 5 years later, I found out that some of my colleagues had been abused by a homosexual paedophile priest and some had left as a consequence of this abuse. And yet, even though this situation was widely known in the order, no remedy, no justice occurred for more than 20 years. I was naive as I think were many of my colleagues. Those who were abused were easy targets. For a great many years, I lost any trust in the Church or any of its teachings.
When I and my family were growing up we could walk past the church and pop in and pray/reflect/sit—all the churches these days seem to be locked. My children don't have what I had—they don't have the church there open any day for them to go inside themselves. And the sermons could be more relating to day to day life—not just about the readings we've heard so often—even if the priest reads a good sermon ...
My experience of faith has been nurtured in many ways but very often though the initiative I have been inspired to take in seeking 'nourishment' beyond the parish setting. Some parish life has/is enriching but often it has been a dry and desolate experience and sometimes even soul-destroying.
In the darkest hours of my life, My faith has always been there for me. God may not be able to hold my hand physically but my parish is always there every Sunday giving normalcy to my life when I needed it most.
In terms of events—World Youth Day 2008, retreats run by the Benedictine Monks of [-], Youth Mission Team and NET ministries retreats, Light to the Nations Easter Pilgrimage, Christus Rex Pilgrimage and Immaculata Mission School (IMS) have all shaped me for the better—particularly IMS and retreats I attended with YMT in helping me to grow in and learn about the Faith. In terms of day-to-day—I love attending Mass at [-] parish [-] as there is regular Mass at (generally) good times for workers, as well as regular adoration and confession times (2x per week each). The church building is also beautiful and truly inspires devotion. I'm also often struck by solid homilies that include solid Church teaching, the truth about difficult and controversial topics, Church history and stories of the saints and the beautiful traditions of the Church.
I don't go to a Catholic church, I go to an Anglican church, and I think it is good to hear God's stories.
When I was younger, I remember being a part of a youth group and regularly meeting. This gave me a sense of belonging to the Church and assisted in my deep connection with the Church.
The only experiences I've had is going to Mass.
I personally don't enjoy religion and going to church because it's boring and I could be doing better things with my time.
Youth group when I was young: movie nights, fun activities not necessarily with any religious content breathed down my throat in the hall and presbytery, met friends who went on to high school with through this fun and light-hearted group (priest who ran this: Father [-] later convicted as paedophile—also shaped me although not physically but I look back and think how easy it must have been to harm children when no other adults were invited to these). Later Antioch which had religion thrust at you causing myself to leave after a few months.
I was raised in a deeply Catholic family. I married a lovely girl whose family were a deeply Catholic family who had priests and nuns as her uncles and aunt. She was brought up in a sense that the hierarchy of the Church (priests and nuns) were on a pedestal far above us ordinary lay people. I was never that entrenched in my religion (although deeply devoted to God and Mary) I pretty much

<p>could distance myself from the structured Church. However, as we men do, we are devoted to our beloved (and family) and we tend to adopt these things. Many years ago, we attended a Mission at our parish church (not the one we now attend) and were so enlightened by the Missionary Fathers that gave that mission. They basically told us that we did not have to see things black and white but there were grey areas and yes, we could think for ourselves. We both have seen the light since then and feel very comfortable in debating issues relative to the Church and how the laity can be part of that. Another example: We belong to a parish that in my opinion is very "old school" where being inside the church is paramount to religion. However, each Christmas Eve we travel to an adjoining parish that conducts an outside Mass. The setting is on the outside slopping lawns of the parish school where up to 1000 worshippers sit on the grass focusing down on the altar with the ocean waves rolling in behind it. They have a "live crib" with the local school kids. To us, that is the most perfect church in and of God's creation.</p>
<p>In 1977, I lived in Tokyo, Japan for 6 months where I attended prayer and meditation under the guidance of the Jesuit missionaries living there at that time. One of those priests was my late cousin—[-]. He lectured in Theology at [-] University and is the author of several books. '[-]' mentored me in faith and dialogue during those 6 months, at a time in my life where I considered myself a 'disillusioned and lapsed Irish Catholic'. Subsequently, my faith strengthened and I was deeply moved by the Spirit thereafter. I was guided by the Spirit and subsequently spared from drugs and alcohol from my late 20's onwards. During one of those conversations with '[-]', he said to me...—"the day will come when the priest will address the congregation during Mass and say to everyone present—'your sins are forgiven'—The congregation will respond (as we do now)—'Lord I am not worthy to receive you under my roof...', etc.'" It will be our personal confession during Mass and Absolution will be given to everyone present. Confession as we now know it will no longer be. My question to you is: Has that day arrived? Following the Royal Commission into Sexual Assault of children, I truly believe that day has come. As a health professional and Mandatory Reporter for 40 years, I find it difficult to fathom how my local parish priest could possibly be expected to operate outside of the Law by remaining 'silent'.</p>
<p>Developing stereotype that Church is for old people, school modernises faith better than the Church. Music appeals to young people. Parish youth group is a good experience. Priests need the ability to be approachable and connect with younger generations. Priest involvement in school communities is a good way to have encounters with young people. ALPHA is a good initiative. [-] Live is a good experience but needs to be better advertised.</p>
<p>- Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation, Weddings, Christmas, Easter and Funerals, Walking into the Vatican.</p>
<p>- Going to weddings, baptisms, communions of family and friends.</p>

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 Wollongong.

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	854
Afghanistan	2
Algeria	1
Austria	2
Bahamas	2
Bahrain	2
Bangladesh	1
Bolivia	1
Botswana	3
Brazil	1
Canada	1
Chile	1
China	1
Czech Republic	1
Egypt	2
Fiji	1
France	1
Germany	3
Greece	1
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	1
India	9
Iraq	3
Ireland	7

Country	Number of respondents
Italy	1
Japan	1
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1
Malta	1
Mauritius	1
Mexico	1
Netherlands	10
New Zealand	8
Pakistan	1
Palau	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Philippines	10
Poland	5
Singapore	1
South Africa	1
Spain	1
Trinidad and Tobago	2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	26
United States of America	4
Uruguay	1
Not stated	265
Total	1,244

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
Mount Carmel	1,000
Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong	200
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Varroville	200
Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes, Wollongong	150
St. Michael's Parish Nowra	150
Sts Peter & Paul Parish Kiama	140
Catholic Parish of Bowral and Mittagong	140
Social Justice Network The Christian Way Friends of ethical and moral science in all matters re. Church and State Governments' Population Policy	140
St. John's Dapto	120
St. Francis of Assisi Warrawong and St. Mary's Berkeley	115
Milton Ulladulla Sussex Inlet Parish	110
Immaculate Conception Parish in Unanderra	100
Catholic Education Office Wollongong	100
St Paul's Camden	90
Milton Catholic Parish Diocese of Wollongong	90
Immaculate Conception Parish Unanderra	87
St. Patrick's College Campbelltown	85
St. Benedict's Catholic College Oran Park	85
Edmund Rice College, Wollongong	80
Corpus Christi Catholic High School	80
Milton Catholic Parish	78
St. Columbkille's Corrimal	70
Magdalene Catholic College	68
Magdalene Catholic College	68
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville	60
St. Joseph's Parish Bulli	60
St Johns Parish Campbelltown	59
St. Michael's Catholic Primary School Nowra	55
St Justin's Catholic Primary Oran Park	50
St. John's Primary School Dapto	50
St. John the Evangelist Catholic High School Nowra	50
St. Paul's School Camden	50
St Marys Star of the Sea College	45

Name of group	Group size
Wollongong Cursillo	45
Wollongong Cursillo	45
St Pius X Unanderra	40
St Therese West Wollongong	40
Milton Ulladulla Sussex Inlet Parish	40
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	40
Mary Mother of the Church Macquarie Fields	40
Mary Immaculate Catholic Parish Primary School Eagle Vale	38
Mary Immaculate Parish	37
St John's School, Campbelltown	37
St Bernard's Parish Batemans Bay Plenary Council Listening Encounter	36
Stella Maris Catholic Primary	35
St. Patrick's School Port Kembla	30
St Anthony's Parish, Tahmoor Picton	29
Neocatechumenal Way Ingleburn NSW	27
All Saints Catholic Parish, Shellharbour City	26
St Bernards Batehaven	24
Tuross Head	24
St Clare's Primary School Narellan Vale	24
Women at the Well	23
Mater Dolorosa Balgownie Plenary discussion session	20
St Michael's Nowra	20
St Michael's Primary School Mittagong	20
Holy Cross Primary School - Helensburgh	20
Parishioners	20
Couples For Christ Oceania (Australia) Mission Ltd - Singles For Christ (Western Deanery Chapter)	19
Mater Dolorosa Church, Balgownie	18
St Marys Star of the Sea	18
St Paul's Parish Albion Park	18
Diocese of Wollongong	16
Benedictine Nuns of Jamberoo	15
Edmund Rice College	13
Edmund Rice College	13
Catholic Women's League Wollongong Branch	12
All Saints Parish Shellharbour	12
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	12
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	12

Name of group	Group size
St Columbkille's	12
Port Kembla Parish	12
St Joseph's Bulli	10
Edmund Rice College Yr 10	10
Chevalier College	10
St Joseph's Parish	10
St Michael Parish	10
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	10
Stella Maris Catholic Primary School Shellharbour	10
Catholic Parishioners	9
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	9
St Columbkille's	9
St Vincent De Paul Society, Thirroul branch.	9
Parishioners - Jamberoo	9
Parishioners	9
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville, NSW	9
OLHC	8
St Benedict's Catholic College Lakemba	8
Nazareth Catholic Primary Shool Staff	8
CatholicCare Shoalhaven/Wollongong	8
Nowra Veterans Men's Shed	8
St Johns Nowra	8
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville, NSW 1	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville, NSW 2	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville, NSW 3	7
St Joseph's Parish Bulli	7
St Joseph's Parish	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Varroville Youth Group 1	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Varroville Youth Group 2	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Varroville Youth Group 3	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Varroville Youth Group 4	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Varroville Youth Group 5	7
St. Paul's Catholic Primary School	7
No name. Group of seven parishioners	7
St Columbkille's	7
Parishioners	7
Cénacle prayer group (in French)	7
28 Oct Plenary Session 1	6

Name of group	Group size
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville. NSW 4	6
4 Nov Grp1	6
Random group	6
St Paul's Catholic Church, Camden	6
Parish	6
MenAlive SFX Wollongong	6
MenAlive SFX Wollongong	6
St Columbkille's Parish	6
Mary Help of Christians, Culburra Beach	6
St Michaels Parish	6
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville. NSW 5	5
Holy Spirit College	5
Holy Spirit Vincentia	5
11 Nov Grp 1	5
St Columbkille's Corrimal	5
St Columbkille's	5
Group of concerned Catholic Women.	5
St Columbkilles	5
St Michaels	5
Vincentia	5
Holy Spirit College	4
Holy Spirit College	4
St Paul's Primary School Camden	4
St. Paul's Catholic Primary School	4
St Columbkilles School	4
Bulli Parish	4
St Michael's Nowra	4
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	4
Mary Immaculate Parish Primary School Eagle Vale	4
Mary Mother Of The Church Macquarie Fields	4
Mason family	4
Four Parishioners	4
Thirroul Parish Plenary 2020 small group	4
Parish acolytes	4
St Michaels Parish	4
Catholic Education Office Wollongong	3
St Joseph's Parish Bulli	3
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	3

Name of group	Group size
St Columbkille's	3
Concerned Catholic Friends	3
Edmund Rice College	2
Parish of St Michael, Thirroul	2
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	2
St Michael Parish, Thirroul	2
Joe Spinnato	2
Catholic Parish of Milton	Not Stated
Ruse Church	Not Stated



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